NATION

Six Nashik techies held for sexual harassment

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Markets halt 5-day rally on ceasefire uncertainty

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

RR, RCB set for top-order shootout in Guwahati

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 10 APRIL 2026 | FRIDAY | BENGALURU | 21 SHAWWAL 1447 H | Vol 5 | Issue No 89 | Pages: 8

B'luru girl scores 100% as 2nd PUC results announced

BENGALURU, 9 APRIL

A Bengaluru student, Adithi A Bapu of SB Mahaveer Jain PU College in VV Puram, aced the Karnataka II PUC results, scoring a perfect 600 in the Commerce stream, as state pass percentage rose. Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board announced the results on Thursday, with an overall pass rate of 86 per cent, up from 73 per cent in 2025. Out of 6.32 lakh students, 5.46 lakh passed. *—SALAR NEWS*

M'rashtra: Marathi mandatory for auto, taxi drivers

MUMBAI, 9 APRIL

Mumbai's auto and taxi drivers may require to know Marathi to keep their permits. Maharashtra has launched a verification drive in Mira Bhayandar, where authorities are examining permits of drivers, who have to take a compulsory language test. The project aims to curb irregularities in the issuance of transport licences and will be gradually extended to cover the entire state. At regional transport offices (RTO), over 12,000 drivers have to write short passages in Marathi as part of the test. The RTO will submit its report in May. *—PTI*

Nepal's ex-PM Oli, ex-home minister get bail

KATHMANDU, 9 APRIL

Nepal former prime minister KP Sharma Oli and ex home minister Ramesh Lekhak were released on Thursday on bail, police said. Oli of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) and Lekhak of Congress were arrested a on charges for suppressing the Gen Z movement of 8 and 9 September, in which 76 people died. A Supreme Court bench ordered authorities to complete the investigation by Thursday or release them. They were freed on condition they were present. Oli was handed to his wife Radhika Shakya and Lekhak to his wife Yashoda. *—PTI*

Assam, Keralam, P'cherry see high turnout

Assam breaks record; 30 injured, 7 arrested in poll violence

GUWAHATI/T'PURAM, 9 APRIL

Assam recorded a voter turnout of over 85 per cent, while Kerala saw more than 78 per cent polling in Assembly elections on Thursday, even as violence in Assam left around 30 people injured and several arrested.

In Assam, clashes were reported from the Patharkandi constituency in Sribhumi district, where Congress candidate Kartik Sena Sinha allegedly entered a polling booth, accused officials of bogus voting and damaged an Electronic Voting Machine (EVM). This triggered a clash between Congress and BJP supporters, leaving about 25 people injured, two seriously. Polling at the booth was halted for nearly three hours before resuming after the EVM was replaced.

Seven people were arrested in connection with poll-related violence across the state, officials said. Senior police officers, including Sribhumi SSP Leena Doley, rushed to the spot to review the situation.

In a separate incident, a polling official, Deben Horo (45), was found unconscious at a booth in Sonitpur district and later declared dead. Doctors suspect an underlying medical condition. Polling continued uninterrupted with a reserve official deployed.

Despite these incidents, voting for the 126-member Assam Assembly continued till 5 pm, with a close contest between the ruling BJP, seeking a third consecutive term, and the Congress aiming for a comeback.

In Kerala, polling remained largely peaceful, with 883 candidates in the fray across 140 constituencies and a voter base of 2.71 crore. Officials expressed confidence that turnout could touch 90 per cent, surpassing the 74.06 per cent recorded in 2021. Polling was also held in Puducherry, which registered over 86 per cent turnout, where the Congress-led opposition is attempting to unseat the ruling AINRC-led front. *—PTI*

Nuns wait in a queue to cast votes in Kerala's Alappuzha district *—PTI*

A nomadic woman carries a child after casting her vote in Puducherry, while an elderly woman displays her inked finger in Assam *—PTI*

Video of Cong 'giving cash' to Bagalkot voters goes viral

BAGALKOT, 9 APRIL

A video showing Congress workers allegedly distributing cash to voters in Bagalkot has gone viral on social media (**in pic**), leading to strong criticism from the BJP, which accused the ruling party of electoral malpractice.

In the video, a man is seen collecting chits and handing out money to voters in the Rajiv Gandhi Nagar and Vambe Colony areas of Navanagar.

As word of the cash distribution spread, large crowds, particularly women, gathered holding chits and seeking money for their votes.

The footage also appears to show Congress workers leaving the area hastily in a car as the crowd increased.

68% voter turnout in Bagalkot, Davanagere South

Despite wide circulation of the video, no formal complaint has been lodged with the Election Commission regarding the malpractice.

Meanwhile, BJP candidate Veeranan Charantimath has accused the Congress of using money and muscle power to buy voters and added that he would raise the issue with the district election officer. *— Agencies*

>>>More on Page 2

Iran may put sea mine in Hormuz as fragile ceasefire wavers

DUBAI, 9 APRIL

Iran's semiofficial news agencies on Thursday published a chart indicating that the country's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard may have placed sea mines in the Strait of Hormuz during the war, in a move seen as pressure on the United States amid a fragile ceasefire and upcoming talks in Pakistan.

The tentative truce, announced earlier this week, appeared strained as Israeli bombardment of Beirut continued, Iran maintained its grip over the strategic waterway, and uncertainty persisted over negotiations expected on Saturday.

Both Iran and the US, which declared victory after Tuesday night's ceasefire, signalled competing positions. Iranian outlets suggested mining activity in the strait — a vital route through which about 20 per cent of global oil and gas trade once passed — highlighting Tehran's leverage. The chart, released by ISNA and Tasnim, marked a "danger zone" over the shipping lane and indicated vessels diverting northwards near Larak Island. It remained unclear whether any mines had since been cleared.

Maritime data showed only 11 vessels transiting the strait on Wednesday, consistent with recent days. Iran has also reportedly imposed tolls of up to $1 per barrel on outbound oil shipments.

Disagreement over ceasefire terms persists. Israel maintains the deal excludes its operations against Hezbollah in Lebanon, while Iran accuses it of violations. Tehran claims rights over the strait and uranium enrichment, whereas US President Donald Trump has said Iran must reopen the route and surrender its uranium stockpile.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also held talks with his Saudi counterpart, Prince Faisal bin Farhan, on Thursday. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4, 5, 6 &7

OPENS TODAY
3 Days of Glamour, Craftsmanship & Unmatched Luxury
ASIA Jewels
Showcase of Fine Jewellery
Image : Gajraj Jewellers
Shop For Upcoming Akshaya Tritiya & Wedding Season
Discover Over 50,000+ Stunning Designs
All Under One Roof
April 10-11-12 2026
JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru
(Near UB City)
Priceless & Most Beautiful Jewellery From
India's Top 50 Jewellers
10:30AM - 8PM / FRI - SUN
Entry & Valet Parking Free / Scan For Venue Direction
FINE GOLD JEWELLERY | DIAMOND JEWELLERY | PLATINUM JEWELLERY | TRADITIONAL JEWELLERY
WEDDING JEWELLERY | PRECIOUS STONE JEWELLERY | KUNDAN & POLKI JEWELLERY | LAB GROWN DIAMONDS

SHE WAS MENTALLY ILL

Woman stays with dead husband for 10 days

CHIKKAMAGALURU, 9 APRIL

A mentally ill elderly woman spent nearly 10 days in her house with her husband's decomposing body, unaware that he was dead.

The deceased, Cyril Monis, 77, had reportedly died at home due to illness around 10 days ago. His wife, who is believed to be suffering from mental problems, failed to realise that he had died.

The incident came to light on Wednesday after neighbours, alerted by a strong foul smell, entered the premises and discovered the body. An autopsy later confirmed that the death had occurred about 10 days ago.

The couple was living alone. Of their two children, the daughter works as a teacher in Dubai, while the son is employed in Bengaluru. According to sources, the son used to speak to his mother over the phone daily. When he enquired about his father, she reportedly responded that he was "fine."

It is learnt that the son had visited the family about 15 days ago and stayed for four days. The death is believed to have occurred shortly after his departure.

With assistance from local social worker Arif, Cyril's body was shifted for autopsy and was later laid to rest at a Christian cemetery in Banakal on Wednesday. *—Salar News*

Misri reviews defence, trade ties in US

WASHINGTON, 9 APRIL

India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri met senior US officials here on a three-day visit to review defence and trade relations and exchange views on developments in the Indo-Pacific and West Asia.

Misri held talks with secretaries Michael Duffey and Elbridge Colby in the Department of Defence, and under secretaries Jeffrey Kessler and William Kimmitt in the Department of Commerce. Misri also had a "fruitful interaction" with Duffey, discussing ways to deepen defence industrial, technology and supply chain linkages in line with the Framework for the bilateral Major Defence Partnership signed last year. His visit follows the announcement by US Ambassador Sergei Gor that an Indian delegation will visit Washington later this month to discuss the bilateral trade deal agreed in February.

Misri's talks aim to address the recent strains in India-US ties after US punitive tariffs and controversial remarks by President Donald Trump regarding India-Pakistan military clashes last May, defence and supply chain cooperation. The US on Thursday said it looked forward to hosting the Indian delegation here later this month to discuss the bilateral trade deal agreed to in February. *—PTI*

—FREEPIK

MDA earns ₹ 156 cr from e-auction of 133 sites

MYSURU, 9 APRIL

The Mysuru Development Authority (MDA) has generated Rs 156 crore by auctioning 133 residential sites through a recent e-auction, reflecting strong real estate demand in Mysuru. While earlier auctions saw high demand in Vijayanagar layouts, buyers this time shifted focus to Vasanthanagar, where sites fetched around Rs 8,000 per sq ft. Dattagalli retained its premium appeal, with prices ranging between Rs 12,000 and Rs 15,000 per sq ft, and several 30x40 sites crossing Rs 1 crore. However, the response was mixed, with 21 sites getting only one bid & none for 33. The authority plans to raise up to Rs 1,000 crore by auctioning vacant plots across multiple layouts to fund new projects, prevent encroachment and offset revenue losses after transfer of layouts to local bodies. —*SALAR NEWS*

Govt to formulate SOPs for trekking in Karnataka

Govt on alert after Kerala woman & teen went missing

BENGALURU, 9 APRIL

Karnataka Minister for Forest, Ecology and Environment Eshwar Khandre has instructed authorities to formulate a standard operating procedure (SOP) for trekking safety, intended to serve as a national model.

The Minister issued the instruction in writing to the chief wildlife warden in the wake of the disappearance of a woman from Kerala in the dense Tadiandamol forest, and the search for a minor girl in Chandradrona hills, his office said in a release on Thursday.

Like the 'e-Gastu' app already developed by the Forest Department and the 'MStripes' app used in tiger reserves, if a similar kind of app is temporarily installed on the mobile phones of trekkers during the trek, it will be easier to track those who go astray, hence the Forest Minister has directed to take steps to develop the app and provide group insurance to trekkers, it said.

Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre issued directions to officials —*PTI*

In addition, Khandre has suggested that nature guides should be equipped with wireless communication sets and they should be held accountable for safety and coordination of trekking groups under their supervision, it added.

—*PTI*

SAFETY TIPS WHILE TREKKING

DO

Carry essentials:
Water (At least 4 litres), dry fruits, whistle, headlamp, power bank.

- Download offline maps before starting.
- Stay on the main trail and be aware of your route.
- Hike with a group (avoid going solo on unfamiliar trails).
- Take regular headcounts in groups.
- Move to a higher point to signal for help.

Don'ts

- Don't wander off the main trail.
- Don't panic or move randomly if lost.
- Don't eat wild plants or unknown food.
- Don't let your phone battery die.

Don't lose sight of your group, especially during descents.

Women voters queue up to cast their votes at a Sakhi polling station in Davanagere South on Thursday —*X/@CEO_KARNATAKA*

Davanagere South, Bagalkot see 68% voters turnout

BENGALURU, 9 APRIL

Around 68 per cent voter turnout was recorded in Bagalkot and Davanagere South Assembly constituencies, where by-polls were held on Thursday. The Congress is trying to retain the seats, while the BJP wants to gain ground there.

The Election Commission said the turnout in Bagalkot was 68.74 per cent, while it was 68.43 per cent in Davanagere South.

The polls were necessitated by the deaths of senior Congress MLAs HY Meti (Bagalkot) and Shamanur Shivashankarappa (Davanagere South). Counting will be done on 4 May.

The BJP fielded former MLA Veerabhadrayya Charantimath in Bagalkot, and a fresh face, Srinivas T Dasakariyappa, in Davanagere South.

The Congress gave tickets to the family members of the late legislators in both constituencies. Bagalkot candidate Umesh Meti is the son of HY Meti, while Samarth Mallikarjun contesting in Davanagere South is the grandson of Shamanur Shivashankarappa.

Samarth's father, SS Mallikarjun, is a minister in the Siddaramaiah Cabinet and in charge of Davanagere district, while his mother, Prabha Mallikarjun, is an MP.

- The BJP fielded former MLA Veerabhadrayya Charantimath in Bagalkot and Srinivas T Dasakariyappa, in Davanagere South. The Congress fielded Umesh Meti and Samarath Mallikarjun in the two constituencies.

Muslim disenchantment appears to be a concern for the Congress in Davanagere South.

The Muslim community strongly demanded the Congress ticket in Davanagere South. Some party groups had opposed giving the ticket to the Shamanur family.

Although the Congress persuaded rebel Sadiq Pailwan to withdraw, he remained in the fray as the move came after the deadline for withdrawing nominations. He later supported the Congress candidate.

In Bagalkot too, the Congress faced dissidence, with other members of Meti's family seeking the ticket. — *PTI*

LPG CRISIS PERSISTS

Members of the autorickshaw drivers' union protest against the shortage and soaring prices of LPG and submit a petition seeking Rs 15,000–20,000 monthly assistance per driver at Freedom Park in Bengalur; Kannada Chaluvali Vatal Paksha president, Vatal Nagaraj stages a protest by riding an autorickshaw mounted on a bullock cart near Majestic on Thursday —*MOHAMMED ASAD*

Court defers verdict in 2016 Yogish Gowda murder case

BENGALURU/ DHARWAD, 9 APRIL

The special court for elected representatives on Thursday posted the judgment in the murder case of Dharwad Zilla Panchayat member Yogish Gowda to 15 April.

The court, which had earlier indicated that it would deliver its verdict on 9 April, postponed the order after all the 21 accused, including Congress MLA Vinay Kulkarni, appeared before it.

Speaking to reporters, Kulkarni expressed confidence that he would be acquitted, asserting that "truth will prevail."

Yogish Gowda was brutally murdered on 15 June 2016, inside a gym owned by him in Dharwad. The police arrested a group led by Basavaraj Muttagi. However, after the case was handed over to the CBI during the tenure of then Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa, fresh facts pointed to the involvement of other individuals.

The CBI arrested Kulkarni on 5 November 2020 alleging his role in the conspiracy. The case witnessed several twists, including allegations that witnesses were influenced with money. The CBI presented evidence suggesting contact between the accused and witnesses, prompting it to seek cancellation of bail. —*Salar News*

Ballari jailer attacked for not providing beedis

BALLARI, 9 APRIL

Prisoners reportedly went out of control in the high security Ballari Central Jail and some prisoners attacked the jailer, Ashok Hosamani, as they were not getting beedis and cigarettes.

Recently, security inside the jail had been tightened, and prison staff had taken strong measures to prevent the supply of beedis and cigarettes. Angered by this, some prisoners turned against the authorities.

The inmates involved in the assault are Altaf, Rasheed, Vinod, Saleem, and Raju. They had been asking jail staffers to supply them beedis and cigarettes. Soon they got into a heated argument with jailer Ashok Hosamani.

As the argument intensified, the five attacked the jailer inflicting serious injuries on his hand and neck. Other staffers rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. The injured officer was treated at the jail hospital.

After receiving information about the incident, Ballari ASP Naveen Kumar visited the jail and conducted an inspection. He reviewed the security situation and the behaviour of inmates and asked the staff to take strict measures to maintain order there. A case has been registered at the Brucepet Police Station in Ballari against Altaf, Rasheed, Vinod, Saleem and Raju for assaulting a public servant. —*Salar News*

UNITED WE STAND

Cong stands firmly with DMK under Stalin's leadership: DKS

CHENNAI, 9 APRIL

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday dismissed claims that the "real Congress" is backing a newly formed political outfit and reiterated that the entire INC stands with Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin.

At an election rally in Maraimalai Nagar, a suburb here, ahead of the Assembly polls, Shivakumar, alongside Stalin, accused the new political entrant of "misleading the public". Tamil Nadu will go to the polls on April 23 for 234 constituencies.

The remarks come in the backdrop of a high-decibel campaign by actor-turned-politician Vijay and his party, TVK, in Tirunelveli on April 8.

During his address, Vijay had claimed that while the DMK had "bought some in Congress with lakhs and crores", the "real Congress" was with him.

Shivakumar clarified that the Congress stands firmly and exclusively with the DMK-led front under Stalin's leadership.

Congress MP Karti Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu Congress Committee President K Selvaperunthagai and other leaders release the Congress manifesto for the Tamil Nadu Assembly polls in Chennai on Thursday —*PTI*

"Some new parties that have come here are claiming the support of a few Congress members. You need not worry. They are misleading the people. The Indian National Congress, under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge, stands united with Stalin ji," he said.

Taking a swipe at film personalities entering politics, Shivakumar likened politics to agriculture, emphasising that it requires long-term patience and grassroots work rather than overnight success.

"Politics is like agriculture. Rain will come; you must plant, apply manure, sow seeds, and wait a long time before you can harvest. Unlike in films, instant stardom is not possible. To serve the people, you need commitment and sustained effort," he added. —*PTI*

Cong hits out at BJP over personal attacks on Kharge

BENGALURU, 9 APRIL

Congress on Thursday criticised BJP leaders for mounting personal attacks on AICC president Mallikarjuna Kharge, alleging that some were targeting him for political gain.

In a statement, the party said certain leaders who had earlier benefited politically under Kharge were now attacking him after joining the BJP to secure positions. It referred to a BJP leader, once described as a "cycle shop customer", who held posts in the Karnataka Housing Board, All India Railway Grievance Cell and Karnataka Forest Development Corporation, but switched sides after being denied party tickets.

Congress also took aim at BJP's Pratap Simha, accusing him of personal attacks and urging him to "introspect" on his own conduct. It criticised CT Ravi for "hit-and-run politics" and questioned him over a related case.

Former minister S Suresh Kumar was accused of targeting Kharge to regain relevance, while Opposition leader R Ashoka was alleged to have concealed criminal cases in his election affidavit. —*PTI*

WITH FLYING COLOURS

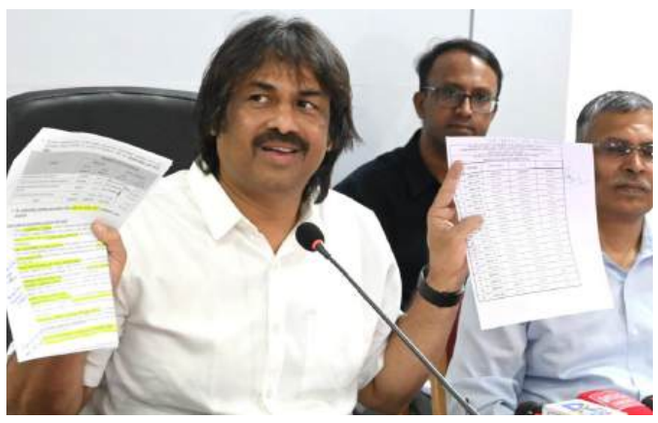
B'luru girl scores perfect 600 as State's PUC results improve

BENGALURU, 9 APRIL

A Bengaluru student, Adithi A Bapu of SB Mahaveer Jain PU College, VV Puram, emerged as a standout performer in the Karnataka II PUC results, scoring a perfect 600 in the Commerce stream, as overall pass percentage rose sharply across the state.

The Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB) announced the results on Thursday, recording an overall pass percentage of 86.48 per cent, a significant jump from 73.45 per cent in 2025. Out of 6,32,200 students who appeared, 5,46,698 passed.

Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts continued to dominate, maintaining their reputation as top-performing regions.



Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa presents the II PUC results at the Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board Office in Malleswaram in Bengaluru on Thursday; Commerce topper Adithi A Bapu celebrates with her parents, hugging her mother after scoring a perfect 600 —*MOHAMMED ASAD*

In the Science stream, Shamanyu S Shetty (Dakshina Kannada) and Nandan Nayak topped with 598 marks, followed by Vaishnavi (Udupi) and Arnavi with 597. In Arts, Archana (Vijayanagar) and Sangeeta secured 598.

Girls outperformed boys, recording a pass percentage of 88.70 per cent compared to 83.65 per cent among boys. Rural students also fared better, with an 87.62 per cent pass rate against 85.92 per cent in urban areas.

Stream-wise, Science recorded the highest success rate at 91.69 per cent, followed by Commerce at 88.04 per cent and Arts at 72.86 per cent.

Category-wise, General (92.69 per cent) and 3A (92.22 per cent) led, while SC and ST categories recorded 80.22 per cent and 80.19 per cent respectively.

Among institutions, residential PU colleges topped with a 93.99 per cent pass rate, followed by unaided colleges (90.73 per cent), while government and BBMP colleges recorded comparatively lower results.

Students dissatisfied with their scores will soon be able to apply for re-evaluation or obtain photocopies of answer scripts. Those failing to secure the minimum 33 per cent marks will get another opportunity through supplementary exams under the board's three-exam system, with dates expected shortly. —*Salar News*

CLASSIFIED

CLOSING DOWN OFFER
RAYMOND DISCOUNT SHOP
BUY ONE TAKE ONE FREE
RAYMONDS
T/W Pant Pc (1.30)
LINEN SHIRT PC (2.50)
SAFARI SUIT PC
3 Pc SUIT LENGTHS
CMBO GIFT BOX
AT NEW M.N. Next to K.F.C
DISPENSARY Rd. OFF COMMERCIAL
BANGALORE-1 Mob: 9343 03 7218

EVM glitches, violence mar Assam polls

Clash between Cong & BJP supporters left around 30 people injured; several arrested

GUWAHATI/SILCHAR/ DIBRUGARH/TEZPUR, 9 APRIL

Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) malfunctions and sporadic violence disrupted polling across Assam on Thursday, though voter turnout remained strong despite rain.

Around 30 people were injured and several arrested in clashes. In Patharkandi constituency in Sribhumi district, Congress candidate Kartik Sena Sinha allegedly entered a polling booth, accused officials of bogus voting and damaged an EVM, triggering a clash between Congress and BJP supporters. About 25 people were injured, two seriously, and polling was halted for nearly three hours before resuming with a replacement machine.

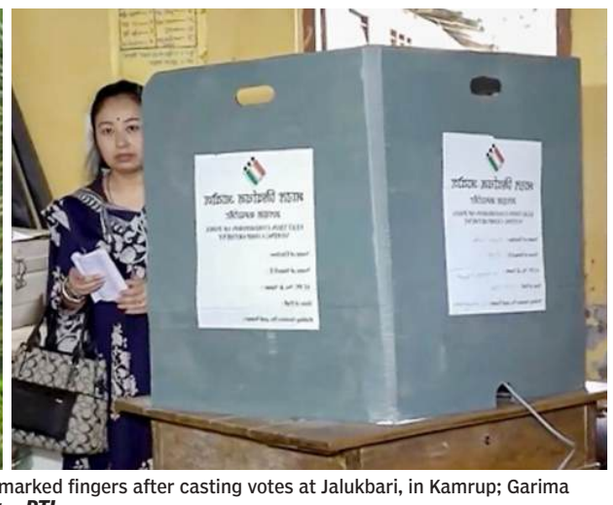
In Dibrugarh's Khowang constituency, three Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) leaders — Samudra Barua, Swakhyar Borgohain and Chitrakamal Handique — were injured in a clash with BJP supporters following allegations of an illegal IT cell. Police said the premises appeared to be a party office, and investigations are underway with no arrests so far.

Minor clashes were reported from several districts, often due to heavy rush and disputes over queues, though police intervened swiftly. Violence was also reported on Wednesday night in Tamulpur, where police fired in the air to disperse a mob and arrested four people. In Sivasagar, three persons were detained after another clash, with MLA Akhil Gogoi alleging involvement of a BJP candidate.

Meanwhile, reports of EVM malfunctions surfaced from multiple polling stations, causing temporary delays. Officials said faulty machines were promptly replaced, including during mock polls, and adequate reserves were kept on standby.

Despite overcast skies and intermittent rain, voters turned out in large numbers across districts such as Kamrup, Jorhat, Kokrajhar and Lakhimpur. Long queues were seen outside polling stations, with participation from first-time voters to the elderly, including wheelchair users, as polling for the 126-member assembly continued till 5pm. —*PTI*

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and his family members show their ink-marked fingers after casting votes at Jalukbari, in Kamrup; Garima Saikia, wife of late music icon Zubeen Garg, casts her vote in Guwahati, on Thursday —*PTI*



> **A powerful, fearless, confident and new Assam will emerge after the results are declared. It will protect the democratic rights and freedom of expression of people**
>
> - Gaurav Gogoi, Assam Congress Chief

FIR filed for fiming inside polling booth

A police complaint was lodged by Assam's Karbi Anglong district administration on Thursday regarding a video shared on social media purportedly showing the voting process inside a polling station. The video was reportedly shot inside a polling station in Diphu constituency. Officials said that an inquiry has been initiated to ascertain the facts and identify those responsible. Appropriate legal action will be taken against any violations of election laws, they added. —*PTI*

—WIKIPEDIA

Posters declare Samrat as Bihar's next CM in Patna

PATNA, 9 APRIL

Posters claiming Samrat Choudhary as the next Bihar Chief Minister were displayed outside the Patna BJP office, as Nitish Kumar headed to Delhi for his swearing-in as a Rajya Sabha MP. Some posters, linked to the Valmiki Samaj Dalit community, were removed by party staff. BJP state media chief Danish Eqbal stated, "We do not know who put up these posters. The decision on the next CM will be made collectively, as per party tradition." Speculation suggests Kumar will hold his last cabinet meeting before resigning. Choudhary, a rising BJP star from the Koeri caste, is seen as the front-runner. The new government is expected after 14 April, subject to final decisions by top leaders, including PM Modi and Amit Shah. —*PTI*

Cong criticises govt's U-turn on COP33 hosting bid

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

The Congress on Thursday criticised the Centre over India's decision to withdraw from hosting COP33 in 2028, claiming it questions the Modi government's commitment to the 2015 Paris Agreement. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh recalled that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced India's intention to host COP33 in Dubai on 1 December, 2023. He said that the move raises doubts about India's short- and medium-term carbon mitigation goals. He also criticised PM's past remarks on climate change, calling them "bizarre," and highlighted the upcoming IPCC report, which could increase pressure on India. —*PTI*

Patnaik accepts Sasmit Patra's resignation

BHUBANESWAR, 9 APRIL

BJD president Naveen Patnaik has accepted Sasmit Patra's resignation as the party's parliamentary leader, citing undisclosed reasons. Patra, a two-time Rajya Sabha MP, submitted his resignation on Wednesday. Some party MPs reportedly called for a change in leadership. The resignation followed Patra's decision to step down from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications and IT, protesting BJP MP Nishikant Dubey's remarks about Biju Patnaik. Patra, leader of the BJD in the Rajya Sabha since 2022, now has no representation in the Lok Sabha, with the party holding six seats in the Upper House. —*PTI*

A man operates a robot while polling is underway during the Assembly elections, at a polling station in Puducherry, on Thursday —*PTI*

BJP, Cong clash in Puducherry poll booth

PUDUCHERRY, 9 APRIL

Groups of BJP and Congress workers were clashing in a booth in Mannadipet Assembly Constituency during the polling on Thursday, police sources said.

Due to the incident, tension prevailed briefly in the booth located in Tirukanoor village.

When a group of BJP workers were standing near a polling booth, those belonging to the Congress objected to their presence there and said that only voters can be present there. Heated arguments ensued between those groups, and they started attacking each other.

Police intervened and dispersed the crowd using canes and restored normalcy. Polling was not disrupted, the police source said.

Puducherry Home Minister A Namassivayam (BJP) is seeking reelection from Mannadipet constituency, TPR Selvam, former Deputy Speaker of Puducherry Assembly is contesting on Congress ticket. —*PTI*

Puducherry Chief Minister N Rangasamy rides a bike to cast vote during the Assembly elections, on Thursday —*PTI*

Protest in Kerala over 'bogus' votes claim

T'PURAM, 9 APRIL

Assembly polling across Kerala progressed largely peacefully, but protests were reported at several booths on Thursday over allegations of bogus voting.

A minor scuffle broke out between Congress and BJP activists at Manalur in Thrissur district after UDF candidate TN Prathapan arrived in the area.

According to police, BJP activists prevented people accompanying Prathapan from entering the booth premises, leading to the scuffle.

In Wadakkanchery, also in Thrissur district, a voter, Sajeev, was unable to cast his vote after election officials informed him that his vote had already been recorded as a postal ballot.

This triggered protests by BJP activists, prompting police intervention.

BJP candidate TS Ullas Babu later arrived at the booth and staged a protest.

A similar incident occurred in Kuttiady, Kozhikode district, where a woman was denied the right to vote after it was found that her vote had already been cast as a postal ballot.

At Malampuzha and Shoranur in Palakkad district, Thrikkaripur in Kasaragod, and Vattiyoorkavu in Thiruvananthapuram, complaints emerged that votes had been cast in the names of original voters, leading to protests.

In Kalpetta, Wayanad, a polling agent was removed after it was found that she was simultaneously working as an ASHA worker.

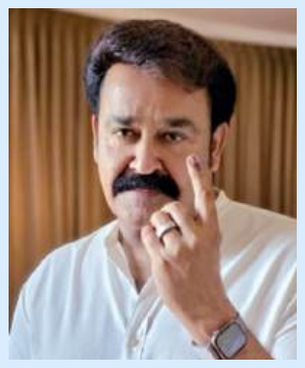
In a separate incident in Uduma, Kasaragod, a Congress agent was caught using "smart spectacles" inside a polling booth.

At a polling booth in Badaje, Manjeshwar, Kasaragod, a defect was noticed in a voting machine that recorded more votes than were actually polled. —*PTI*

NEWLYWEDS MAKE SPECIAL STOP AT POLLING BOOTH

A newly-wed couple in Kerala's Pathanamthitta district made a special stop at the polling station on Thursday, heading straight from their wedding to cast their votes. Divyasree and Ashwant, who got married around 9am, turned up to vote close to noon right from the wedding hall. Just like them, Akhila Antony (in pic), a native of Meppadi in Wayanad district, arrived to vote in her wedding attire barely an hour before her marriage was scheduled at a church in Mananthavady at 10.30am. —*PTI*

PROMINENT FACES CAST VOTES



Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan casting his vote at a polling station in Kannur; Actor Mohanlal in Thiruvananthapuram; Congress MP Shashi Tharoor votes in Thiruvananthapuram; Actor Mammootty in Ernakulam district, Congress candidate Chandy Oommen at Puthuppally, on Thursday —*PTI/ANI*

Modi announces 6 guarantees for WB polls

HALDIA, 9 APRIL

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** on Friday announced six guarantees for Bengal if the BJP wins the Assembly polls and sought the ouster of the "'nirmam'" (cruel) TMC government.

Addressing a rally in Haldia in Purba Medinipur, Modi said the BJP, once in power in the state, will replace the TMC's "reign of fear" with the BJP's "trust".

Modi pledged to bring about changes in the governance system and make public servants accountable to citizens for their actions.

The BJP will reopen all files on corruption and crimes committed against women in Bengal.

The benefits of government facilities and schemes will be made available to all refugees who took shelter in India legally, Modi said.

NIA files FIRs on gherao of judicial officers

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) registered 12 cases to probe a gherao of judicial officers, who were deputed for work relating to the special intensive revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in West Bengal's Malda.

The move came on the direction of the Supreme Court, which had taken suo-motu cognisance of a letter sent by the Calcutta High Court's chief justice, detailing how the judicial officers, including three women and a child, being held captive by a mob for hours, without food or water. —*PTI*

Didi hits back at PM over fish production facts

KOLKATA, 9 APRIL

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for claiming that her government failed to attain self-sufficiency in fish production, and accused him of misrepresenting facts. Addressing a public rally at Agarpara in North 24 Parganas district, she also alleged that people are not allowed to eat non-vegetarian food in BJP-ruled states. "I heard that today, he (PM) said that there is no fish production in Bengal, while Bihar is producing more and exporting. But you do not allow people to eat fish in Bihar. Here we purchase fish from markets and eat," she said. —*PTI*

SUNETRA TO WIN

Congress withdraws Baramati bypoll candidate for 'decorum'

MUMBAI/PUNE, 9 APRIL

The Congress on Thursday withdrew its candidate from the bypoll to the Baramati assembly seat, from where Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar is in the fray, with the party saying the decision was taken to maintain Maharashtra's political culture and decorum.

Party candidate Akash More withdrew his nomination in Baramati in Pune district just before the deadline.

"As per directions from the party leadership, I have withdrawn my nomination," More told reporters.

Despite the Congress' withdrawal, the election will take place on 23 April as several other candidates are still in the fray. Votes will be counted on 4 May.

Addressing a press conference in Mumbai, state Congress president Harshwardhan Sapkal said the party decided to withdraw its candidate in the wake of the tragic death of then deputy CM Ajit Pawar, husband of Sunetra Pawar, in a plane crash just over two months ago.

The decision was taken to maintain the state's political culture, decorum and dialogue.

He said the party's decision had nothing to do with Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis speaking to him with request for an unopposed election.

"Despite Congress' withdrawal, election will take place because there are over 30 candidates in the fray," he said.

Sapkal said Sunetra Pawar had spoken to him three times and even met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge in Delhi to seek withdrawal of the party candidate. —*PTI*

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar —*PTI*

- Despite the Congress' withdrawal, the election will take place on 23 April as several other candidates are still in the fray. Votes will be counted on 4 May.

'EC wanted fair polls, transferred TN Chief Secy, DGP'

CHENNAI, 9 APRIL

AIADMK Chief Edappadi K Palaniswami on Thursday defended the EC's decision to transfer Tamil Nadu chief secretary and director general of police, saying the move was aimed at ensuring free and fair elections in the state.

He questioned CM MK Stalin's opposition to the transfers. These officers have been with DMK government for so long and there was nothing wrong in transferring them during polls, he said. The EC had on 8 April ordered the transfer of Tamil Nadu chief secretary N Muruganandam & appointed senior IAS officer M Sai Kumar in his place.

ONLY SOUGHT STALIN'S WHEREABOUTS: EPS

Palaniswami said he had only sought to know where Stalin "disappeared" during the pandemic, but did not say anything wrong about him. —*PTI*

—AI

Live fish lodges in toddler's throat, removed surgically

INDORE, 9 APRIL

A routine task of cleaning a home aquarium turned into a medical emergency for an Indore family after a fish jumped into their toddler's throat. Doctors surgically removed the fish from the one-year-old boy, officials said on Thursday. The freak incident occurred on 3 April, when the child's elder siblings were cleaning their aquarium and playing with ornamental fish kept in a net. A fish suddenly jumped out of the net and fell into the toddler's mouth while he was laughing loudly, officials said. Panicked family members rushed the boy to hospital immediately. —*PTI*

—ANI

3 more kids die in Rajasthan due to mystery illness

JAIPUR, 9 APRIL

Three more children have died in Rajasthan's Salumber, with authorities saying their deaths are not connected with the mysterious deaths of five children earlier this month. The fresh deaths took place in the last two days in the Jhallara and Lasadiya areas in the district and have been attributed to vomiting and diarrhoea. Chief Medical and Health Officer Mahendra Kumar Parmar said a four-and-a-half-year-old child was brought dead to hospital. Two kids died after suffering fever, vomiting and diarrhoea. Medical teams surveyed families and provided treatment. —*PTI*

Pune doctor loses over Rs 12 crore in online stock scam

PUNE, 9 APRIL

A 75-year-old doctor from Pune was cheated of Rs 12.31 crore in an online share trading scam, with the fraudsters allegedly forcing him into making multiple investments, police said. The senior citizen received a message from an unidentified number in January containing a list of "recommended" stocks along with a link. On clicking the link, he was added to a WhatsApp group where the administrators claimed to be senior executives of a financial management firm. Investigators said the group was used to build credibility, with members, believed to be part of the racket, posting messages showing profits from investments. "The doctor was directed to a fraudulent application resembling a reputed international firm and was told to transfer funds," police said. —*PTI*

—INSTAGRAM

Gorillaz to tour India for the first time in Jan 2027

MUMBAI, 9 APRIL

Grammy-winning virtual band Gorillaz has announced its first performance in India in January 2027. The India tour follows the release of their ninth studio album, 'The Mountain. The album features collaborations with Indian artists Asha Bhosle, Asha Puthli, sitarist-composer Anoushka Shankar and flautist Ajay Prasanna. Gorillaz will perform in Bengaluru on 23 January at the District Arena @ Terraform, followed by a second show in Mumbai on 27 January at the Jio World Garden, BKC. Pre-sale tickets begin on 13 April. —*PTI*

Six Nashik techies held for sexual harassment

Team lead held after eight women file complaints

NASHIK, 9 APRIL

The Nashik police have arrested six employees of an IT company. One of them was arrested for 'sexual exploitation' of an office colleague through a 'promise of marriage,' and the remaining five for 'sexual harassment' and 'hurting' the religious sentiments of women colleagues over the last four years.

Police said the IT has a workforce of nearly 300 employees and the arrested men are mostly team leaders. Nine cases have been registered, including eight by women alleging sexual offences and 'hurting' religious sentiments.

The ninth complaint was lodged by a male about hurting religious sentiments, police added.

ACP (Crime) Sandeep Mitke said, "An HR official of the IT company has been named suspect in one these cases as the complainant said that she had sent him an email, reporting the harassment at the workplace by the team leaders concerned but the HR official advised her to "stay cool as some gestures were common in MNCs." The HR official has not been arrested so far.

Police said the complainant in the rape case said in her complaint that the suspect despite being married duped her into a physical relationship by lying that he would marry her. The complainant alleged that she was regularly sexually exploited by the suspect at a place on Trimbak Road.

As per his insistence, his associate also started sexually harassing her by telling her that he knew about her affair, the complainant alleged.

Nashik Police Commissioner Sandeep Karnik said, "We have constituted a SIT headed by an ACP to probe these cases."

The first of the nine cases involving 'rape' was registered at the Devlali police station on 26 March and the remaining eight were registered at the Mumbai Naka police station. — PTI

The ninth complaint was lodged by a man and it was about offending religious sentiments, police added —*ANI*

- Police said the rape complainant case said in her complaint that the suspect, despite being married, duped her into a physical relationship by lying that he would marry her

ORGANISED CRIME

Take trafficking of kids seriously, SC tells States & UTs

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

The SC has voiced grave concern over the rising cases of child trafficking, saying that gangs are operating across the country and if States and UTs do not take immediate action, thing will go beyond control. The court said only state governments can act effectively in this regard.

"As a court we can monitor, but ultimately the action has to be taken by states," Justices JB Pardiwala and KV Viswanathan said on Wednesday.

Justice Viswanathan said the retrieval of children in some cases proves the problem can be tackled, but it requires political will which is lacking.

The verdict, delivered on 15 April 2025, had mandated several institutional reforms, including completion of trials in trafficking cases within six months.

It had also directed strengthening of Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs) and improving investigation standards.

Besides asking for setting up of state-level committees to monitor vulnerable trafficking hotspots, it had asked the authorities to treat missing children cases as trafficking unless proven otherwise.

On Wednesday, the bench noted that MP, Goa, Haryana, Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Odisha, and Punjab had not filed reports.

When the home secretary of Madhya Pradesh offered an apology for the lapse, the bench granted a "final opportunity" but warned that failure would lead to states being officially branded as "defaulting."

The matter will now be heard on 29 April. — *PTI*

Thousands defy curfew to protest bombing in Manipur

IMPHAL, 9 APRIL

Defying curfew, thousands of demonstrators across the five valley districts of Manipur held protests and burnt tyres against the bomb attack that killed two children in Bishnupur district.

At Tiddim Line in Imphal West district, hundreds of people attended a rally held by the All Manipur United Clubs Organisation, denouncing the killings and demanding the immediate arrest of the perpetrators.

Several children, holding posters of the two minors killed in the attack, also attended the rally, which was stopped by security forces from advancing further near Kwakeithel.

Later, representatives of AMUCO and others were escorted to meet Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh.

On 7 April, a 5-year-old boy and his 6-month-old sister were killed when suspected militants hurled a bomb at their house at Tronglaobi in Bishnupur district.

On Thursday, at Samurou in Imphal West district, hundreds of protestors also attempted to head towards the CM's official bungalow but were stopped by the police.

Protesters also burnt tyres and stopped vehicles at Moirang Lamkhai and Ningthoukhong in Bishnupur district.

Tyre burnings were reported from Khurai in Imphal East district and parts of Thoubal and Kakching districts.

Earlier, police arrested three members of the United Kuki National Army during operations following the Tronglaobi incident. — *PTI*

Hijam Ningol Oinam Ongbi Loidang, the grandmother of the two children who died in the bomb attack in Bishnupur on Tuesday, cries during a press conference at Raj Medicity in Imphal on Thursday. —*PTI*

Providing quota for women in LS, RS urgent, says PM

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised the importance of the proposed amendments to the Women Reservation Act, describing it as a reflection of the aspirations of millions of women across India. In a signed article on his website narendramodi.in, he urged MPs to unite in backing this significant move, stating it is an affirmation of the principle that society progresses when women do.

The Budget Session has been extended for three days from 16 to 18 April, when the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam' will be discussed and amended for implementation. Once enacted, it will increase Lok Sabha seats to 816, reserving 273 for women, with seats allocated based on quotas for SCs and STs.

He described the bill as a historic occasion, emphasising that delaying action would prolong an imbalance. Modi appealed to MPs across parties to support this cause, saying it is about the nation's future. — *PTI*

RESTRICTING ENTRY TO TEMPLES WILL AFFECT HINDUISM: SC

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

The SC observed on Thursday that Hinduism will be adversely affected if temples and "mutts" restrict entry on the grounds of sect and denominations inside a religion.

A nine-judge Constitution bench headed by CJI Surya Kant made these observations while responding to the submissions of senior advocate CS Vaidyanathan that Article 26(b) of the Constitution gives the right to a religious denomination to manage its own affairs and will have primacy over Article 25(2)(b), which empowers the State to throw open all Hindu institutions of public nature.

Vaidyanathan appeared in court on behalf of the devotees of Lord Ayyappa of the Sabarimala temple in Kerala.

The bench, also comprising Justices BV Nagarathna, MM Sundresh, Ahsanuddin Amanullah, Aravind Kumar, Augustine George Masih, Prasanna B Varale, R Mahadevan, and Joymalya Bagchi, is hearing petitions about discrimination against women in places of worship, and on the scope of religious freedom.

Vaidyanathan, representing the Nair Service Society and other organisations connected to the devotees of Lord Ayyappa, put forth the point that they constitute a separate religious denomination and consequently, have the right to manage the affairs of the hilltop temple.

He submitted that a denominational temple can give permissive rights and confine it only to the denomination. — *PTI*

Army rescues 135 tourists in Sikkim, many still stranded

GANGTOK, 9 APRIL

A total of 135 stranded tourists were rescued by the Army from North Sikkim, where multiple landslides snapped road connectivity, officials said on Thursday.

Around 1,000 tourists remain stranded in Lachen. Efforts are underway to ensure their rescue, they said.

The rescue operation is being carried out by the Trishakti Corps under the Eastern Command amid heavy snowfall, they added.

Critical passes have been opened and alternate routes activated to facilitate the rescue, named 'Operation Him Setu', officials said.

A total of 32 light vehicles and 10 motorcycles have been moved out so far, with Army vehicles deployed to tow civilian vehicles across steep, snowbound stretches, they said.

Medical emergencies and those requiring immediate assistance are being prioritised, officials said.

The BRO is working closely with the Army, undertaking continuous road clearance, snow removal and restoration of connectivity despite challenging terrain and weather, they said.

"Our foremost priority is the safety of every citizen. Our teams remain committed to providing all assistance," an Army official said. — PTI

Ship with 15K tonne LPG docks in Mumbai

THANE, 9 APRIL

The Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority here on Thursday said it received an India-flagged vessel carrying 15,400 tonnes of LPG which successfully crossed the Strait of Hormuz.

JNPA described the development as notable in the backdrop of the war involving Iran, the US and Israel.

"Today, JNPA proudly welcomed 'Green Asha,' an India-flagged LPG vessel. It is now moored at JNPA's liquid berth operated by BPCL-IOCL," it said in a release.

This is a significant milestone for this port as it is the first such vessel to reach JNPA after the onset of the war, it said. — *PTI*

'Green Asha,' an India-flagged LPG vessel which crossed the Strait of Hormuz, has moored at JNPA's LPG berth operated by BPCL-IOCL, in Navi Mumbai. —*PTI*

CBI opposes Kejri's judge recusal plea

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

The CBI has opposed Arvind Kejriwal's plea seeking the recusal of Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma from hearing the liquor policy case at the Delhi High Court. The agency argued that Kejriwal and other accused cannot seek her recusal solely because she attended a "legal seminar" organised by the Akhil Bharatiya Adhivakta Parishad, asserting it does not demonstrate any ideological bias. In its response, the CBI emphasised that several sitting Supreme Court and High Court judges, including CJI Surya Kant, have attended events organised by the RSS-affiliated lawyers' body. The agency warned that accepting Kejriwal's argument would force all such judges to recuse from cases involving politically exposed persons.

The CBI said that allegations of bias over attending legal seminars with no political focus were "unscrupulous" and an attempt to undermine the court's authority, and amounts to gross contempt of court. — *PTI*

Delhi cops file chargesheet in pit death case

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

The Delhi Police has filed an 877-page chargesheet in the Janakpuri pit death case, naming three accused and detailing lapses linked to the execution of the construction project, an official said on Thursday.

The chargesheet was submitted in court on 7 April, said the police, adding that the case was registered on 6 February.

As per the police statement, the accused are Himanshu Gupta, 45, a suspended director of the main contractor company, KKSPUN Private Limited, Rajesh Kumar, 47, a sub-contractor associated with the project and Yogesh, 23, a labourer deployed at the site.

The accident took place on the night of 5 February when Kamal Dhyani, a resident of Kailashpuri, was returning home from his office in Rohini and fell into a 15-foot-deep pit dug by the Delhi Jal Board in the Janakpuri area.

The chargesheet includes detailed findings on the role and responsibilities of the accused, contractual arrangements, and on-site conditions at the time of the incident.

Police said the probe examined compliance with safety norms, labour deployment, and execution practices adopted during the work. — *PTI*

FIGHTING TERROR

Former Naxals to train Ch'garh cops on how to neutralise IEDs

RAIPUR, 9 APRIL

The Chhattisgarh police have roped in Naxalites who have surrendered with expertise in handling IEDs to train security personnel, to enhance their capabilities, officials said on Thursday.

The counter-insurgency strategy comes shortly after Chhattisgarh, particularly the Bastar region that had grappled with Left-Wing Extremism for over four decades, was declared free of armed Maoists on 31 March.

Officials said, this knowledge-sharing will play a crucial role in making Bastar safer by strengthening the capacity of security forces to neutralise IEDs. It will protect both personnel and local communities from the dangers of explosives that Maoists had once planted extensively across the region.

Around 20 former Maoist cadres, many with prior experience in handling IEDs, have been identified to assist in training programmes at the Counter Terrorism and Jungle Warfare College in Kanker district, IGP, Bastar Range, Sundarraj Pattilingam said.

Their role will focus on sharing practical, field-level knowledge on how such devices are assembled, concealed, and triggered in dense forest terrain. Many of the selected individuals held key operational roles in Maoist ranks, he said. — *PTI*

Massive fire causes system failure at Mumbai airport

MUMBAI, 9 APRIL

A massive fire broke out inside Terminal 1B at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in the Vile Parle area on Thursday, leading to a system failure.

The incident triggered an immediate emergency response from the Mumbai Fire Brigade, police and airport authorities.

Cable trays and switch boxes on the ground floor of the terminal caught fire, which has since been brought under control. No casualties have been reported so far. Viral videos showed thick smoke billowing inside the terminal.

Airport staff and security teams evacuated passengers from the affected area, and flight operations were monitored closely to avoid disruption.

The chief fire officer of the Mumbai Fire Brigade said that the exact cause of the blaze is still under investigation. Authorities have temporarily cordoned off the zone, while technical teams assessed damage to the terminal's power infrastructure.

The incident comes less than two months after a similar fire at a hotel in the Andheri area near the airport, where the blaze was confined to an air-conditioning unit and exhaust ducting on the terrace of a multi-storey building. No one was injured. — *Agencies*

Ceasefire halts West Asia war, but can peace last?

The ceasefire provides a breathing space for hammering out a definitive agreement concerning long-term peace with Iran, & peace in West Asia —ANI

US President Donald Trump's acceptance of a Pakistani proposal for a two-week ceasefire in the war with Iran brings a sigh of relief to the international community.

Just hours before, many had been alarmed by Trump's threats to bomb Iran back to "the stone age" and destroy its "civilisation".

The ceasefire provides a breathing space for hammering out a "definitive agreement concerning long-term peace with Iran, and peace in West Asia", according to Trump.

However, the road to a final settlement will be complex and bumpy, though not insurmountable.

UNDERESTIMATING THE ENEMY

After six weeks of escalating war and rhetoric, starting with joint US-Israel attacks on Iran and the latter's robust response, the three combatants have not only inflicted serious blows on each other. The region and the world have also suffered from a massive oil, liquefied gas and inflationary crisis as Tehran closed the Strait of Hormuz.

This was not something Trump had expected. He initially anticipated that the combined US and Israeli military power would rapidly prevail. This would force Tehran, which had suppressed widespread public protests early in the year, to capitulate and thus open the way for favourable regime change.

But the Iranian government proved to be more resilient, entrenched and resourceful than anticipated. The government was also strategic in fighting back by hitting US assets across the Persian Gulf and Israel, as well as closing the Strait.

Meanwhile, Trump could not solicit active support from US allies for his joint war endeavours with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Netanyahu is under indictment by the International Criminal Court for war crimes in Gaza.

The allies had not been consulted. They didn't consider it to be in their individual national interests to participate in a war contrary to international law and the United Nations Charter.

COSTING BILLIONS

Further, the US's global adversaries, Russia and China – both having strategic cooperation agreements with Iran – vehemently opposed the war. They joined scores of other countries around the world in calling for de-escalation and measures to avoid more economic repercussions.

The conflict widened. Israel unleashed a campaign to occupy southern Lebanon in response to attacks from an Iran-aligned Lebanese paramilitary group, Hezbollah.

The costs of the war then soared for all sides. For the US alone, the price tag amounted to at least $1billion a day. This added substantially to the federal debt of close to $40 trillion.

The situation evolved into a race between missiles and interceptors; it would just be a matter of who ran out first.

It was recently reported that Israel was getting low in interceptors and the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) faced a shortage of manpower.

UNPOPULAR IN THE US

On the other hand, despite the US and Israeli decapitation of its leadership, air supremacy and bombardment of thousands of military and non-military targets, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) maintained a sustained retaliatory capability. It managed to fire dozens of advanced missiles and drones on a daily basis against targets in the Gulf and Israel.

More importantly, the war proved increasingly unpopular in the US. As the public felt the effects of it on the rising cost of living and at the petrol stations, some 61 per cent of citizens opposed the war. Trump's ratings plummeted in the opinion polls.

In view of these variables, Trump could not possibly stand by his promise of escalating Operation Epic Fury to the level of erasing such a sizeable country as Iran. Iranian cultural and patriotic features, as well as the devotion of the country's many citizens to Shia Islam, mitigated against outside aggression, as in previous occasions in its history.

LONG ROAD AHEAD

This is not to claim that negotiating and concluding a comprehensive agreement for an enduring peace between the US and Iran will be easy.

But a crucial section of Trump's acceptance of the ceasefire, which gives us an insight into his thinking, is as follows:

we received a 10-point proposal from Iran (in response to the US 15-point proposal), and believe it is a workable basis on which to negotiate. Almost all of the various points of past contention have been agreed to between the US and Iran, but a two-week period will allow the Agreement to be finalised and consummated.

The ten points include a cessation of hostilities on all fronts, including Lebanon, though Israel has since claimed Lebanon is not included in the ceasefire.

SOME OF THE OTHER KEY ELEMENTS ARE:

- The US must fundamentally commit to guaranteeing non-aggression.
- The continuation of Iran's control over the Strait of Hormuz.
- Removal of primary and secondary sanctions on Iran.
- and acceptance of Iran's right that it can enrich uranium for its nuclear program (for peaceful purposes).

It is now incumbent on Trump to pull into line Netanyahu, who has toiled for a long time not only to destroy the Iranian government, but also to reduce the Iranian state as a regional actor.

If this happens and all the parties negotiate in good faith, there is room for optimism. We could potentially see the dawn of a post-war regional order based more on a localised collective security arrangement than on a regional supremacy of one actor over another. —PTI

SALAR

Pro-Iran groups are using AI to troll Trump

Pro-Iran groups have used artificial intelligence to create slick internet memes in English to try to shape the narrative during the war against the US and Israel and foster opposition to it.

Analysts say the memes appear to be coming from groups linked to the government in Tehran and are part of a strategy of leveraging its limited resources to inflict damage on the US, even indirectly. That includes how Iran has used attacks and threats to control the flow of traffic through the Strait of Hormuz and maintain a stranglehold on the world's economy. A ceasefire raised hopes Wednesday of halting hostilities, but many issues remained unresolved.

"This is a propaganda war for them," Neil Lavie-Driver, an AI researcher at the University of Cambridge, said, referring to Iran.

It's not the first-time memes have been used in a conflict, and they have evolved to include AI images in recent years. AI imagery bombarded Ukrainians after the Russian invasion in 2022. Last year, the term "AI slop" became widely used to describe the glut of imperfect images posted online during the Israel-Iran war to try to destroy the country's nuclear program.

In the conflict that began 28 February with joint US-Israel strikes, the memes have used well-honed cartoons that lambast US officials.

- Published on various social platforms, they are racking up millions of views — though it's not clear how much influence they have had.

President Donald Trump as old, out of step and internationally isolated. They have referenced bruising on the back of Trump's right hand that prompted speculation about his health; infighting in Trump's MAGA base; and US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth's fiery confirmation hearing, among other things.

The pro-Iran images circulating online include a series that uses the style of the "Lego" animated movies. In one, an Iranian military commander raps, "You thought you ran the globe, sitting on your throne. Now we turning every base into a bed of stone," as Trump falls into a bullseye built of "Epstein files," the US government's investigative records on disgraced financier and convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

THE MEMES ARE STEEPED IN AMERICAN CULTURE

The memes are fluent not just in English but in American culture and trolling. Published on various social platforms, they are racking up millions of views — though it's not clear how much influence they have had.

They have portrayed US WON! The way to crush imperialism has been shown to the world. Trump Surrendered."

In addition to the memes coming from pro-Iran groups, Iranian government accounts have trolled the US, including in a post on Wednesday from Iran's Embassy in South Africa that said, "Say hello to the new world superpower," with a picture of the Iranian flag. Both the US and Iran declared victory after agreeing to a ceasefire.

Analysts say the deep grasp of US politics and culture is the fruit of more old-school methods of propaganda: a decades-long Iranian government program to promote narratives against the US and Israel.

GROUPS MAKING MEMES ARE TEAMING WITH GOVT

The animations show levels of sophistication and internet access that indicate ties to government offices, said Mahsa Alimardani, a director of WITNESS, a human-rights group working on AI video evidence.

State media has reposted some of the memes, including some from the account behind the "Lego"-style videos, Akhbar Enfejari, which means Explosive News.

Akhbar Enfejari described themselves as Iranians producing and uploading from within Iran in an effort to disrupt decades-long dominance of Western control of the airwaves.

After the ceasefire was announced, Akhbar Enfejari posted: "IRAN

MESSAGING FROM THE US AND ISRAEL

Analysts say the US and Israel do not appear to be engaging in the same kind of campaign — and given the restrictions Iran has put on internet access in the country, getting such messages to ordinary Iranians would be difficult.

Early in the war, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu released a video that used AI to make it seem like he was speaking in Farsi, in which he urged Iranians to overthrow their government. The White House has published a steady stream of memes, but those are aimed at a US audience and feature clips from American TV shows and sports.

The US government-run Voice of America, which for decades beamed news reports to many countries that had no tradition of a free press, does still broadcast in Farsi, though it is has been operating with a skeleton staff since Trump ordered it shut down.

"This world order is really changing overnight and the US is not going to end up necessarily as the state that everybody listens to," Snow said. —PTI

An AI-generated Lego style propaganda video by the pro-Iran groups shows US President Doanld Trump's alleged involvement in the Epstein Files —SCREENGRAB

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

India's newly launched digital census prompts fear of hidden agendas

The world's most populous country has launched a fully digital census, which involves millions of enumerators and also allows the people to report their own data — but many fear it will be used for political manipulation.

India has been conducting a fully digital census since 1 April, deploying over 3 million enumerators while also providing people with an opportunity to enter their data into a self-enumeration portal.

In the first phase, the officials will focus on house listing and housing conditions. This involves collecting data on 33 parameters, including building materials, access to basic amenities like electricity and clean water, and ownership of assets such as smartphones and vehicles.

Every building will also be geo-tagged to ensure complete geographic coverage and an accurate reflection of the country's infrastructure.

The second phase, scheduled for early next year, is to focus on the population, gathering detailed demographic and socio-economic data. This includes recording age, education, and occupation for every individual. By capturing migration patterns and fertility data digitally, the officials hope to form a comprehensive profile of India's evolving population, which is already considered the largest in the world.

Most notably, however, the census will include a comprehensive enumeration of castes across all communities, the first such exercise since 1931.

FEARS OF HIDDEN AGENDAS LURKING BEHIND CENSUS

Between 1 April and 15 April, Indian citizens have the option to report all the vital data themselves.

"The self-enumeration exercise is a secure, web-based facility available in 16 regional languages. For the first time, respondents can fill in their details online at their convenience before the enumerator's visit," said a government statement.

But for the people with little experience with technology — most of whom live in rural parts of the country — the online portal might prove to be too much of an obstacle. Their data would still need to be gathered by census takers, but that process also comes with its own set of challenges.

Even before the census was launched, critics questioned whether the enumerators would actually be given the time and training to handle the vast number of households that needed to be processed.

Most importantly, critics are concerned that the data may be skewed for political manipulation. The results, expected in 2027, will feed into some of the most politically sensitive decisions India faces, from caste enumeration to the eventual redrawing of parliamentary constituencies.

India has been conducting a fully digital census since 1 April, deploying over 3 million enumerators while also providing people with an opportunity to enter their data into a self-enumeration portal —AI

A matter of trust

The last census was conducted in 2011. While fraudulent enumerator or a manipulated local tally was always possible, proponents of the old way of data gathering argue the damage was more likely to be limited, and that data was recorded on paper and took more time to process.

Today, with India shifting from paper to digital, the data will flow into central systems almost instantly. This census also gathers more sensitive information than before such as caste, religion, economic status, and migration thus raising the stakes further, especially if such data were ever to be cross-referenced with other national databases.

"The risks are not new, but digitization changes their scale. What was once local and contained can now become systemic if safeguards fail," SY Quraishi, former chief election commissioner, told DW.

The census' success "will depend less on apps and more on transparency, audits, and whether it is seen as fair and inclusive," he told DW.

Quraishi warns that caste enumeration could reshape quotas and trigger tensions, while delimitation of constituencies risks deepening a North–South fault line over political representation in the country.

LACK OF INTERNET EXPERIENCE RAISES RISK OF FRAUD

"The issue is less about digitization itself and more about whether robust safeguards, transparency, and accountability frameworks are in place to ensure the integrity and security of the data," Reetika Khera, an economist from Delhi's Indian Institute of Technology, told DW. Drawing on recent government survey data, Khera notes that digital preparedness is poor. This, Khera states, raises questions about who can realistically participate in self-enumeration.

A NEW ERA OF INDIAN POLITICS?

The risks go beyond access and the issues of data security and accountability. India's shift to a digital census is not merely a technical upgrade but a structural change in how the state counts and engages with its population.

"The shift to a digital format, while potentially improving efficiency, also raises the possibility that data could be processed and operationalised faster, with limited public scrutiny, shaping the timeline for a future delimitation exercise," Yamini Aiyar, currently a visiting senior fellow at Brown University, told DW.

In Aiyar's reading, the issue is not that such an outcome is predetermined, but that the opacity around timing, process and data use risks deepening existing political anxieties around how the census will ultimately shape India's electoral map.

CENSUS SCALE POSES UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGE

Dipa Sinha, a development economist specialising in economic and social policy, points out that while this is the first fully digital census, India is not new to digital data collection.

Surveys like the National Sample Survey, the country's long-running, large-scale household survey system that collects socio-economic data for policy and planning, have used similar methods before.

Sinha said it is not clear what mechanisms are in place for data protection, privacy, and correction of errors in such a large, technology-driven exercise. —DW News

Myanmar Parl fills cabinet with mostly ex-generals

NAYPYITAW, 9 APRIL

Myanmar's parliament approved a cabinet Thursday that is largely former generals and holdovers from the past military-led government under Min Aung Hlaing. Despite the formation of a new government, following controversial elections, there's little signs of a return to civilian governance five years after he led the 2021 army takeover. Min Aung Hlaing will be sworn into office as president Friday, along with two vice presidents and cabinet members. Parliament Speaker Aung Lin Dwe said the appointments of 30 ministers were approved with no objections. According to the official list, 24 are current or former generals and military officers or lawmakers from the military-backed party. Several ministers are facing sanctions. —*PTI*

Pak man pleads guilty to planning NYC Jewish attack

NEW YORK, 9 APRIL

A Pakistani national pleaded guilty to attempting to commit an ISIS-inspired attack at a Jewish centre here in 2024, around the anniversary of the 7 October Hamas attacks on Israel. Muhammad Shahzeb Khan pleaded guilty to attempting terrorism transcending national boundaries. He planned a mass shooting using automatic weapons. Officials said, "New York was the 'perfect' venue for his attack." Khan communicated with undercover officers, for rifles and equipment. He intended to enter the US illegally from Canada. Arrested near the border, he later admitted intent "of killing Jewish people in Brooklyn". He said the plot was "a terrible, extremely dangerous and morally reprehensible idea". Sentencing is scheduled in August.—*PTI*

SL repatriates 125 telecom fraud suspects to China

BEIJING, 9 APRIL

Sri Lankan police repatriated 125 suspected criminals to China for telecom fraud, China's Ministry of Public Security said Thursday. The suspects returned on 29 March with support from Chinese authorities. The joint operation reflects deepened international law enforcement cooperation to combat cross-border telecom fraud. Chinese officials claimed to have "completely dismantled" fraud networks in Myanmar and Cambodia. Thousands of victims across multiple countries were affected by gangs operating along the Thai-Myanmar border. By the end of 2025, Chinese courts sentenced more than 41,000 individuals for crimes linked to telecom fraud. —*PTI*

IMF reaches deal with Lanka for $700M bailout

COLOMBO, 9 APRIL

Sri Lanka and the International Monetary Fund have reached staff-level agreement on economic policies to conclude programme reviews under the Extended Fund Facility. The agreement will release USD 700 million from the USD 2.9 billion bailout. The IMF stated, "Sri Lanka's ambitious reform agenda continues to deliver commendable outcomes." Growth reached 5 per cent in 2025, inflation rose to 2.2 per cent, and reserves hit USD 7 billion. However, risks remain from the ongoing West Asia conflict and disaster impacts. The IMF stressed fiscal discipline, improved tax compliance, and stronger governance reforms. "Protecting the poor and vulnerable... should remain a priority," it said, urging targeted support and continued economic reforms for stability and resilience.—*PTI*

Trump says US forces will remain near Iran

Warns if Iran fails to reopen Hormuz, 'the shootin' starts'

WASHINGTON, 9 APRIL

US President Donald Trump has said US warships and troops will remain deployed around Iran until a "real agreement" is implemented, signalling pressure despite a temporary ceasefire. On Truth Social, Trump warned that if Iran failed to comply, "the shootin' starts," and insisted Tehran would not be allowed to build nuclear weapons while the Strait of Hormuz "will be open and safe."

His remarks came as US Vice President JD Vance underscored Washington's hardline stance, warning that Trump "will not abide by the terms" if Iran does not reopen the strategic waterway.

The deal is a ceasefire, a negotiation -- that's what we give -- and what they give is that the Straits are going to be reopened. If we don't see that happening, the President is not going to abide by our terms if the Iranians are not abiding by their terms. — JD VANCE, US VP

Speaking en route from Hungary, Vance clarified that Lebanon was never part of the ceasefire and reiterated US demands, including a complete halt to Iran's uranium enrichment.

Iran accused the US and Israel of undermining the truce. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said the agreement required a broader halt to hostilities, including in Lebanon, and warned Washington must choose between "ceasefire or continued war via Israel." Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf called talks "unreasonable," alleging the US had already violated key conditions, including continued Israeli strikes on Hezbollah and refusal to accept limited Iranian enrichment.

The White House rejected Iran's claims, with Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt stating Lebanon was not covered by the deal. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has backed the US position.

US demanded that the channel be reopened and sought to keep peace talks on track.

Fresh strikes have been reported across Iran and Gulf states, raising doubts about the truce's durability. Oil prices climbed again, rising above USD 97 per barrel, while Asian markets slipped amid uncertainty. Ship-tracking data also showed limited traffic through the Strait, highlighting continued disruption. US-Iran talks, led by Vance and Ghalibaf, are expected in Islamabad this weekend. —*PTI*

A rescue worker extinguishes burning cars at the site of an Israeli airstrike in central Beirut, Lebanon —*PTI*

Israeli strikes kill 200+ in Lebanon

BEIRUT, 9 APRIL

At least 203 people were killed and more than 1,000 wounded in massive Israeli airstrikes across Lebanon, including central Beirut, marking the deadliest day in over five weeks of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah, according to Lebanese health authorities. Several strikes hit densely populated commercial and residential areas during rush hour, causing heavy civilian casualties. Lebanese President Joseph Aoun condemned the attacks as "barbaric."

Israel said it targeted Hezbollah positions and confirmed killing Ali Yusuf Harshi, an aide and nephew of Hezbollah leader Naim Kassem. The military described the operation as one of its largest, striking more than 100 targets within minutes across Beirut, southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley, including missile launchers, command centres and intelligence infrastructure.

Rescue teams worked overnight to search for survivors trapped under rubble, while additional strikes in southern Lebanon reportedly killed more civilians. The scale and intensity of the bombardment forced residents to flee as smoke and debris blanketed parts of Beirut.

Hezbollah responded by firing rockets into northern Israel, saying attacks would continue until Israeli operations stop. Sirens were reported in Israeli border areas as tensions escalated further.

The violence has drawn strong international criticism. UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper called the strikes "completely wrong" and warned they risk mass displacement and a worsening humanitarian crisis. European leaders have urged Israel to halt operations and push for broader de-escalation. —*PTI*

'Iran's right to enrich uranium is necessary'

Iran's nuclear agency chief of said that protecting Tehran's right to enrich uranium is "necessary" for any ceasefire talks with the US. Mohammad Eslami, who leads the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran, said, "It is a part of the necessary (things) that nobody speaks about," Eslami said, referring to the US refusal to acknowledge enrichment as one part of Iran's 10-point plan for a permanent ceasefire.

Pakistan played 'conduit' in US–Iran ceasefire talks: Report

WASHINGTON/ ISLAMABAD, 9 APRIL

Pakistan's role in the US–Iran ceasefire talks was limited to that of a conduit, rather than an independent broker. According to the Financial Times, Washington leaned on Islamabad to deliver its proposal to Tehran.

Iran was more "likely to accept the US-backed offer if it was delivered by a Muslim-majority neighbour state," as per the report.

Pakistan Prime Minister **Shehbaz Sharif**—who was the first to announce the ceasefire plan— questioned that despite Lebanon's inclusion in the ceasefire, Israel continues its military operations against Hezbollah.

US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu both dismissed this statement.

Despite Pakistan's reduced role, Iran has confirmed a 10-member delegation will arrive in Pakistan on Thursday for upcoming talks to resolve the conflict with the US and Israel. The crucial parleys have been set for Friday in Islamabad.

The US delegation, led by US Vice President JD Vance, has not confirmed an arrival time. No specific timeframe has been provided, other than that the talks are scheduled for Friday.

Meanwhile, Prime Minsiter Sharif has established the National Coordination and Management Council (NCMC) — just hours before the ceasefire announcement— to address the West Asia conflict's impact on the country's economy and security. —*Agencies*

'POORLY RUN, PIECE OF ICE'

Trump targets Greenland again as NATO rift deepens

WASHINGTON, 9 APRIL

US President Donald Trump revived his criticism of NATO after a closed-door meeting with Secretary-General Mark Rutte, invoking the Greenland dispute and warning the US may reconsider its.

Ahead of the talks, Trump had suggested Washington might exit NATO, accusing members of failing to support the US during the Iran conflict, when Tehran disrupted the Strait of Hormuz and sent energy prices soaring. Afterward, he posted: "NATO WASN'T THERE WHEN WE NEEDED THEM," adding a separate jibe — "REMEMBER GREENLAND, THAT BIG, POORLY RUN, PIECE OF ICE!!!"

- A 2023 US law prevents any president from withdrawing from NATO without Congressional approval backed by Secretary of State.

The meeting came shortly after a two-week US-Iran ceasefire which reopens the strait. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt confirmed Trump had discussed leaving NATO, though no formal decision followed.

A 2023 US law prevents any president from withdrawing from NATO without Congressional approval, legislation backed by Secretary of State Marco Rubio. Senator Mitch McConnell urged Trump to remain "clear and consistent," warning against alienating allies.

Tensions have grown as Trump criticised NATO's stance on Greenland, a Danish territory he had earlier sought control over. This caused allies like Spain and France to initially restricted US military access during the Iran war. —*PTI*

'1K aid workers killed since 2023'

More than 1,000 humanitarian workers have been killed globally in the past three years, nearly triple the death count in the previous three years, the UN said on Wednesday. From 2023 to 2025, over 560 were in Gaza and the West Bank, 130 in Sudan, 60 in South Sudan, 25 in Ukraine and 25 in Congo. That compares with 377 killed from 2020 to 2022. "This is the collapse of protection," UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher commented.

France finalises Hormuz mission

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said on Thursday that the EU and its partners are "finalising" plans to escort merchant ships in the Strait of Hormuz. The mission is set to deploy as soon as regional fighting ends. Shipping traffic will be able to cross once an"escort system," agreement is in place Barrot said. On Wednesday, French President Emmanuel Macron stated that approximately 15 nations are ready to participate in the mission.

Iran still mourns Khamenei's death

Iran began mourning on Thursday, marking the 40th day since supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed at the start of the Iran war, on 28 February. In Tehran, mourners began their rally from Jomhouri Eslami Square to the neighbourhood of Khamenei's office. Iranian state television aired similar commemorations in other cities. Khamenei's body has yet to be buried. His son, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, is now Supreme Leader.

ISRAELI STRIKES KILL 1 AL JAZEERA, 2 LEBANESE JOURNALISTS

Israeli strikes on Wednesday killed several journalists amid escalating regional violence. In West Gaza City, an Al Jazeera correspondent, Mohammed Wishah, was killed in a drone strike; the Israeli military alleged he was a Hamas member. In Lebanon, where Israeli strikes targeting Hezbollah killed more than 180 people on Wednesday, Ghada Dayekh, a presenter with Sawt Al-Farah, and Suzan Khalil, a reporter and presenter on Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV and Al-Nour Radio, were killed. —*PTI*

AUSTRALIA MOVES TO SHORE UP FUEL SUPPLIES AMID DISRUPTIONS

Australia will underwrite two companies buying fuel at inflated prices, with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese warning on Thursday that supply disruptions would "have a long tail" even if the ceasefire holds. The government agreed to terms with Australia's largest suppliers Ampol and Viva Energy, to underwrite contracts for gasoline and diesel bought on the spot market for prices above normal rates, adding that it would have the power to direct fuel distribution, Albanese said. —*PTI*

JOE ROGAN BREAKS UP WITH DON

North Korea tests cluster-bomb missiles

SEOUL, 9 APRIL

North Korea on Thursday said its testing spree this week involved various new weapons systems, including ballistic missiles armed with cluster-bomb warheads, as it pushes to expand nuclear-capable forces aimed at rival South Korea.

The report by North Korean state media came a day after South Korea's military said it detected North Korea firing multiple missiles from an eastern coastal area in its second round of launches in two days.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said the tests lasted three days, starting Monday and also included demonstrations of anti-aircraft weapons, purported electromagnetic weapons systems and carbon-fibre bombs.

KCNA said the latest tests included demonstrations of cluster-munition warhead systems mounted on the nuclear-capable Hwasong-11 ballistic missiles, which resemble Russia's Iskander missiles in their design for low-altitude, manoeuvrable flight to evade missile defence systems.

The launches underscored continuing tensions between the Koreas, blunting South Korean hopes for warmer relations. —*PTI*

'Iran war distracts from Epstein files'

WASHINGTON, 9 APRIL

Joe Rogan suggested, on his podcast, that US President Donald Trump launched the Iran war to divert attention from the release of documents related to Jeffrey Epstein, in remarks made during a recent episode of his show.

Rogan is considered the most important and influential podcaster in the world with around 11 million to 15 million listeners/viewers per episode.

Speaking with guest Arsenio Hall, Rogan argued that "misdirection" has long shaped American politics. He cited former president Bill Clinton, claiming the 1999 bombing of Yugoslavia drew focus away from the Monica Lewinsky scandal. Rogan said "You give people a new problem to think about."

Joe Rogan is one of the most influential podcasters in the world with up to 15 million listeners/viewers per episode —*JOEROGAN.COM*

Trump has been referenced in Epstein-related documents, and his past association with the disgraced financier is well documented. However, the president has not been accused or charged with any offences linked to Epstein and has said he ended their relationship well before Epstein's 2008 conviction.

Rogan, who endorsed Trump in 2024, has become increasingly critical since the launch of "Operation Epic Fury" in Iran. He has warned the conflict could escalate into a global war and questioned Trump's judgement.

The podcaster also said some supporters felt "betrayed" by Trump's shift from campaign pledges to avoid foreign wars. However, polling indicates strong backing for the move among his core base.

Distancing himself from the movement, Rogan recently criticised Trump and described those sections of his support base in harsh terms, while acknowledging that some remain "genuine patriots." —*Agencies*

Rupee falls to close at 92.63 against USD

MUMBAI, 9 APRIL

The rupee depreciated 9 paise to close at 92.63 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, amid the fragile West Asia situation, keeping investors wary of the opening of the Strait of Hormuz. Forex traders said markets are in a wait-and-watch mode rather than strong directional positioning.At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 92.63 against the US dollar, then lost ground to touch an intraday low of 92.92 against the greenback. It also hit the day's high of 92.53 during the session. On 8 April, the rupee appreciated 52 paise to close at 92.54 against the US dollar after the Reserve Bank kept the key benchmark rate unchanged with a neutral stance. *—PTI*

Gold futures trade higher at Rs 1.51 lakh/10g

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

Gold prices pared early losses to trade higher at Rs 1.51 lakh per 10 grams in futures trade on Thursday, supported by cautious buying amid a fragile ceasefire between the US and Iran. On the Multi-Commodity Exchange, the yellow metal contract for June delivery opened lower, but later reversed losses to trade in the green territory. The most traded June contract for gold rose Rs 211, or 0.14 per cent, to Rs 1,51,987 per 10 grams. However, the relief is fragile as markets remain cautious. In the international market, Comex gold futures for the June contract slipped USD 25.05, or 0.52 per cent, to USD 4,752.15 per ounce in New York *—PTI*

Volkswagen eyes 5% mkt share in India by 2030

MUMBAI, 9 APRIL

German automotive manufacturer Volkswagen Group is targeting 5 per cent market share in the Indian vehicle market by the turn of the decade. Alternative fuel technologies are slated to play a key role in achieving the target, a senior company official said on Thursday. The group, which in 2018 announced its India 2.0 strategy led by Skoda, had set a target to achieve 5 per cent market share by 2025 but missed it due to events like the COVID-19 pandemic, and currently has about 2.5 per cent share in India. Skoda Auto Volkswagen India Pvt Ltd manages the Indian operations of six Volkswagen Group four-wheeler brands - Skoda, Volkswagen, Audi, Porsche, Lamborghini and Bentley *—PTI*

Adani Green's arm, UAE firm partner for energy projects

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

Adani Green Energy announced on Thursday that its subsidiary Adani Renewable Energy Middle East Ltd (AGEL UAE) has signed a joint venture agreement with Minerva Holding RSC to develop renewable energy projects in India. Minerva is wholly owned by EPointZero. IHC Group is the largest listed company in the UAE with a market capitalisation of over USD 230 billion. Under the agreement, AGEL UAE will acquire up to 20 pc stake in the joint venture Minerva Renewables Holding RSC. Minerva will thereby have the right to appoint up to four Directors. Meanwhile, Adani Green Energy will have the right to appoint one director, as per the agreement between the two companies. *—PTI*

Markets halt 5-day rally on ceasefire uncertainty

Sensex tumbles over 900 points, Nifty falls 222 points

MUMBAI, 9 APRIL

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty buckled under heavy selling pressure to close with deep cuts on Thursday after investors pared exposure to financial, banking, and IT stocks as renewed tensions in West Asia faded the ceasefire-led optimism.

Weak trends in Asian and European markets, a jump in crude oil prices and uninterrupted foreign fund outflows also made investors jittery in the domestic market.

Snapping its five-session winning run, the 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 931.25 points or 1.20 per cent to settle at 76,631.65. During the day, it dived 1,215 points or 1.56 per cent to 76,347.90.

The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 222.25 points or 0.93 per cent to end at 23,775.10.

"Focus now will be on domestic company earnings, and sectors getting impacted due to surging crude prices. Investors will wait for more clarity," Ankur Punj, MD of Equirus Wealth, said.

From the 30-Sensex firms, InterGlobe Aviation, Larsen & Toubro, Eternal, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the major laggards. However, Bharat Electronics, Power Grid, NTPC and Tata Consultancy Services were among the gainers.

The BSE SmallCap Select index climbed 0.26 per cent, and the MidCap Select index went up by 0.15 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, BSE top 10 banks tumbled 1.86 per cent, private banks index (1.75 per cent), bankex (1.58 per cent), financial services (1.41 per cent), PSU Bank (1.21 per cent), services (1.04 per cent) and MidSmall Private Banks Quality Tilt (0.88 per cent).

However, Capital Goods jumped 1.64 per cent, Metal (1.30 per cent), Power (1.27 per cent), Hospitals (0.75 per cent), Healthcare (0.74 per cent), Utilities (0.69 per cent), Telecommunication (0.42 per cent).Brent crude jumped to USD 97.85 per barrel. *—PTI*

ADDED 2,356 EMPLOYEES

TCS Q4 net profit jumps 12.22% to Rs 13,718 crore

MUMBAI, 9 APRIL

Country's largest IT services company TCS on Thursday reported a 12.22 per cent jump in its March quarter net profit at Rs 13,718 crore.

The Tata Group company reported a net profit of Rs 12,224 crore in the January-March period last year and Rs 10,657 crore in the preceding December quarter. For fiscal year 2025-26, TCS' PAT inched up 1.35 per cent to Rs 49,210 crore, as against Rs 48,553 crore in FY25.

The company added 2,356 jobs in Q4 to take the overall number of employees to 5,84,519 as on 31 March 31.

The company's employee base declined by 23,460 in FY26 due to 12,000 job cuts because of changes in the technology landscape.

TCS is the first company in the USD 315 billion Indian IT sector to report its earnings for the fiscal year 2025-26, which saw a deepening of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies and subsequent concerns on the employment in the sector.

In the reporting quarter, its revenue from operations jumped 9.64 per cent to Rs 70,698 crore from the Rs 64,479 crore in the year-ago period, while the same for the full fiscal jumped 4.58 per cent to Rs 2.67 lakh crore. The operating profit margin expanded to 25.3 per cent in the March quarter, up from 24.2 per cent in the year-ago period.

Its chief executive and managing director K Krithivasan said that the growth momentum was broad based across major markets and industries. It signed new deals of USD 12 billion in the three months. The voluntary attrition stood at 13.7 per cent at the end of the quarter. *—PTI*

NCLAT upholds order on distribution of funds

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has dismissed a joint petition by five banks challenging the distribution of funds to dissenting financial creditors SBI and Punjab National Bank.

The banks—Indian Bank, UCO Bank, Bank of Baroda, ICICI Bank, and Union Bank of India—argued against the distribution mechanism approved by the Committee of Creditors (CoC) and the subsequent NCLT order.

A two-member bench of the NCLAT, comprising Chairperson Justice Ashok Bhushan and Member (Technical) Indevar Pandey, confirmed that the distribution process, as per the resolution plan approved by the CoC and NCLT, was lawful and binding. The tribunal stated that the monitoring committee formed after the bidding process could not have altered the distribution.

The court noted that payments to SBI were compliant with Sections 30(2)(b) and 53(1) of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, approved by the CoC and the Appellate Authority. The case concerned insolvency proceedings of OCL Iron and Steel, initiated in September 2021, with resolution plan approval in March 2023.

Indrani Patnaik, the successful resolution applicant, transferred Rs 35.20 crores to SBI as a dissenting creditor. SBI challenged the distribution order before the NCLT, which directed payments to SBI based on liquidation value.

The five banks appealed to the NCLAT, which upheld the NCLT's decision, stating it merely enforced the already approved liquidation value. *—PTI*

GST RATIONALISATION

World Bank raises India's growth forecast to 6.6%

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

The World Bank has raised India's growth projections for 2026-27 fiscal to 6.6 per cent and said that although GST rate cuts would boost consumer demands in the initial months of the fiscal, headwinds arising from the West Asia crisis could dent growth.

The FY27 projection compares with estimates of 6.9 per cent by the RBI, 6.1 per cent by the OECD, and 6 per cent by Moody's Ratings.

In its South Asia Economic Update report, the World Bank said India's growth is estimated to have accelerated from 7.1 per cent in FY25 to 7.6 per cent in FY26, owing to strong domestic demand and export resilience.

Private consumption growth was particularly robust, supported by low inflation and rationalisation of the goods and services tax (GST).

Elevated global energy prices may put upward pressure on prices and constrain households' disposable income, it said.

Government consumption growth is expected to soften to set higher subsidy outlays for cooking fuel and fertilizers. Investment growth is likely to moderate.

The World Bank also said that India is well placed to weather the current global energy shock with ample buffers, including high foreign exchange reserves, fiscal space and low inflation, which will support growth despite global headwinds.

India had dealt well the trade turbulence last fiscal and its economy entered the West Asis crisis, which has led to volatility in oil markets.*—PTI*

CBI to probe IDFC First Bank fraud

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is prepared to assume control of the Rs 590 crore embezzlement case involving IDFC First Bank and the Haryana government's accounts in Chandigarh.

The Haryana government decided to hand over the investigation to CBI. An FIR is expected to be registered soon, based on the Haryana State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau case.

The alleged fraud was committed by bank employees and others in accounts held by the Haryana government. Several arrests have been made, including two former IDFC First Bank employees and private individuals owning a partnership firm.

Police and ED investigations suggest funds were diverted from Haryana government departments' accounts, transferred to shell companies, and used for gold purchases and real estate investments. Cash withdrawals have been significant.

The bank paid Rs 583 crore to the Haryana government and aims to recover its dues.*—PTI*

DISNEY PLANS TO LAY OFF 1,000 WORKERS

CALIFORNIA, 9 APRIL

American multinational entertainment conglomerate Walt Disney is planning to terminate around 1,000 employees as part of the company's newly appointed chief executive, Josh D'Amaro, said a Wall Street Journal report on Thursday.

According to the report, the upcoming job cuts mark another step in Disney's ongoing push to simplify and restructure its vast entertainment empire and is going to affect the firm's recent consolidated market department.

After Bob Iger returned as CEO in 2022 and initiated a massive restructure, the firm had to cut more than 8,000 employees.

Sources stated that the latest round of layoffs had been planned even before D'Amaro assumed his current role.

The firm is facing a challenging transition as profits from streaming remain lower than the steady earnings it once enjoyed from traditional TV. It is dealing with a weaker box office and rising competition. Disney is now shifting its investments toward digital businesses that will drive future growth. *—Agencies*

Tata, US firm partner for AI platform

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

Tata Power has announced a partnership with US-based Databricks to establish a future-ready data and AI platform aimed at accelerating innovation and creating more resilient, data-driven energy systems.

In a statement, Tata Power said the enterprise-wide adoption of the Databricks platform will enhance operational efficiency, support smarter decision-making, and foster scalable digital innovation across all business sectors.

The unified platform will facilitate intelligent grid management, advanced power planning and optimisation, enhanced billing and collection processes, precise renewable energy forecasting, and operational excellence in solar manufacturing and rooftop businesses. It will also deliver a seamless, single-view customer experience.

By leveraging Databricks, Tata Power can unify data engineering, analytics, and AI on a single, scalable platform, integrating edge, operational, and enterprise data, thereby eliminating silos and accelerating insight-led decision-making organisation-wide.

A notable feature of this transformation is the adoption of Genie, Databricks' AI agent that enables employees to interact with their data and receive trusted answers instantly. *—PTI*

'Energy, critical minerals expansion pose challenges'

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

India's efforts to diversify energy sources and increase access to critical minerals are vital for its economy, but they also pose new challenges, Tata Steel CEO and managing director **TV Narendran** stated on Thursday.

Speaking at the AIMA Leadership Conclave, Narendran described India's diversification as a "layered vulnerability," highlighting reliance not only on imports but also on political goodwill to ensure supply.

He noted that the decade began with the pandemic, which caused massive disruption, prompting governments to act swiftly, accelerating scientific progress and forcing societies and businesses to adapt.

He pointed out subsequent shocks, including fractured global supply chains, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, energy and commodity volatility, rising trade barriers, technological controls, and disruptions in key shipping routes amid the West Asia crisis. India has the opportunity to strengthen its position globally. *—PTI*

SAYS FINANCIAL HARM 'UNCLEAR'

US court unblocks Pentagon's Anthropic blacklisting

WASHINGTON, 9 APRIL

A US federal appeals court on Wednesday refused to block the Pentagon from blacklisting artificial intelligence laboratory Anthropic.

The US Court of Appeals in Washington rejected Anthropic's request for an order that would shield the San Francisco company from the fallout stemming from a dispute over how the Pentagon could deploy its Claude chatbot in fully autonomous weapons and potential surveillance of Americans while the panel is still collecting evidence about the case.

But the setback in Washington came after Anthropic had already prevailed in a separate case focused on the same issues in a federal court.

In that case, a judge forced the US administration to remove a label tainting the company as a national security risk.

Anthropic filed the two separate lawsuits in San Francisco and the Washington appeals court last month, asserting the Trump administration was engaging in an "unlawful campaign of retaliation" because of its attempt to impose limits on how its AI technology can be deployed.

The Trump administration blasted Anthropic as a liberal-leaning company trying to dictate US military policy.

In the San Francisco case, US District Judge Rita Lin ruled that the Trump administration had overstepped its bounds by labeling Anthropic a supply chain risk unqualified to work with military contractors and issuing other directives that could cripple a company locked in a race for AI supremacy.

That decision prompted the Trump administration to remove the stigmatising labels from Anthropic and take other steps clearing the way for government employees and contractors to use Claude and other chatbots. *—PTI*

Rotomac 'scam': HC grants bail to businessman

LUCKNOW, 9 APRIL

The Allahabad High Court has granted bail to businessman **Rajesh Bothra** in connection with the Rotomac "scam" case, noting that the trial is expected to be lengthy.

Justice Rajiv Singh of the Lucknow bench passed the order on Tuesday, allowing Bothra's bail application.

The case, registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), alleges that Rotomac Exim Private Limited and its promoters defrauded a bank by obtaining credit through forged documents, false bills of lading, and fabricated transactions, subsequently defaulting on repayments. An FIR was lodged in 2020.

Senior advocate Gaurav Mehrotra, representing Bothra, argued that his client was falsely implicated and had cooperated with investigations, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. He also stated Bothra is on bail in other related cases and has not violated any conditions.

CBI's counsel Anurag Kumar Singh claimed Bothra played a key role in the fraud and misled the bank through transactions via his companies.

The court said there was no proof of "bail misuse." *—PTI*

-PTI

Gill fined ₹ 12 lakh for GT's slow over-rate against DC

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

Gujarat Titans skipper Shubman Gill has been fined Rs 12 lakh for maintaining a slow over-rate during their Indian Premier League clash against Delhi Capitals, which they won in a thrilling last-ball finish here.

Gujarat Titans secured their first win of the season with a one-run victory over the hosts in a high-scoring cliffhanger on Wednesday.

"Gujarat Titans (GT) Captain Shubman Gill has been fined after his team maintained a slow over-rate during Match No. 14 of the TATA Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 against Delhi Capitals (DC) at Arun Jaitley Stadium, Delhi," said an IPL media advisory.—*PTI*

Rashid unlikely to feature in one-off Test against India

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

Advised by doctors to stay away from red-ball cricket following a back surgery, star Afghanistan all-rounder Rashid Khan has hinted that he might skip the one-off Test against India in Mullanpur in June.

While the prospect of playing a Test in India is enticing, Rashid maintained that his priority remains staying fit for the 2027 ODI World Cup in South Africa.

The 27-year-old, who underwent lower-back surgery following the 2023 ODI World Cup, revealed that doctors have cautioned him against the traditional format. Despite that, he featured in a Test against Zimbabwe last year, bowling 54 overs and picking up 11 wickets.—*PTI*

DDCA director alleges ticket fraud at IPL venue in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 9 APRIL

Delhi and District Cricket Association director Anand Verma has alleged that valid ticket-holders are being denied access to IPL matches at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here by "unauthorised persons" who have obtained duplicate tickets through fraud, a charge that DDCA's top brass has rejected. In a complaint to the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central District), Verma alleged that he and his guests were prevented from entering the hospitality section of the stadium despite holding valid tickets for the April 4 game between the Delhi Capitals and the Mumbai Indians.He also claimed that the tickets assigned to him had already been used by "unauthorised persons".—*PTI*

-PTI

India's first Test win hero CD Gopinath passes away at 96

CHENNAI, 9 APRIL

C.D. Gopinath, who had been the last surviving member of India's first Test-winning team, passed away peacefully in his sleep at his daughter's house in Adyar here on Thursday. He was 96.

Gopinath, born in Madras (now Chennai), made his Test debut against England during the 1951-52 series. A right-handed batter, he had scored an unbeaten 50 and 42 during the second Test at the Brabourne Stadium in Mumbai.

India won its first Test in the last game of the said series at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium, where Gopinath contributed 35 runs before Roy Tattersall dismissed him.

Gopinath had captained Madras from 1955–56 to 1962–63. He also served as national selector for a while before managing the 1979 tour to England. —*PTI*

RR, RCB set for top-order shootout in Guwahati

RCB emerged as one of most explosive batting units this season

GUWAHATI, 9 APRIL

Riding on explosive starts from Yashasvi Jaiswal and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Rajasthan Royals will look to extend their dominance, while defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru will bank on a rejuvenated Devdutt Padikkal as the two in-form sides lock horns in an IPL clash here on Friday.

RCB have a settled top-order under the watch of the talismanic Virat Kohli, who hasn't shown any signs of rust despite stepping away from T20 internationals in 2024, while Phil Salt also unleashed his explosive abilities in the previous game.

Batting one down, Padikkal has carried his domestic form seamlessly into the IPL, signalling a return to fluent best with an aggressive yet controlled approach.

Padikkal had made an immediate impact in his debut IPL season, scoring 473 runs for RCB and establishing himself as a stylish batter.

However, subsequent stints with Rajasthan Royals and Lucknow Super Giants didn't quite yield the desired returns.

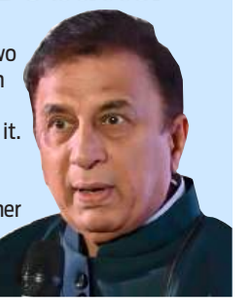
However, it is RCB's bowling transformation that has stood out. Once considered their Achilles heel, the attack now looks far more rounded. Jacob Duffy has stepped up in the absence of Josh Hazlewood, delivering incisive spells, while Krunal Pandya and Suyash Sharma have effectively choked runs in the middle overs.

The Royals, meanwhile, have emerged as one of the most explosive batting units this season, powered by the opening pair of Jaiswal and teenage sensation Sooryavanshi.

The match starts at 7:30 pm IST —*PTI*

You cannot fault David Miller's intent: Gavaskar defends DC batter

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar defended Delhi Capitals batter David Miller for his refusal to take a single in the IPL thriller against Gujarat Titans that cost his side the match, saying the South African's intent cannot be faulted. Needing two off two to reach 211, Miller refused a single off Prasidh Krishna on the penultimate ball. He missed the final delivery but ran for a single. However, Kuldeep Yadav, from the other end, was unable to beat Jos Buttler's direct throw after the two batters had crossed over. "David Miller was backing himself; he had been striking the ball well and believed he could finish it. You can't fault that intent. In the end, it also came down to execution. Prasidh Krishna bowled a superb slower bouncer at the right height, which made it difficult. These are very fine margins in pressure situations," Gavaskar told 'JioHotstar'. The cricketer-turned-commentator added that game awareness is crucial in high-pressure moments, something that former India head coach Ravi Shastri highlighted during the tied Test against Australia in 1986. During that match in Chennai, with India chasing 348, Shastri showed great composure with an unbeaten 48.



BADMINTON ASIA C'SHIPS

Ayush Shetty enters QFs; Sindhu, Prannoy lose

NINGBO, 9 APRIL

Young Indian shuttler Ayush Shetty entered the men's singles quarterfinals of the Badminton Asia Championships with an impressive straight-game win, but the seasoned PV Sindhu was eliminated from the women's event here on Thursday.

World number 25 Ayush, who is also the reigning US Open Super 300 champion, registered a 21-16, 21-12 victory over his world number 20 rival, Chinese Taipei's Chi Yu Jen, in a commanding display. He will next face the third seed, Jonatan Christie of Indonesia.

However, it was a disappointing day for the rest of the Indian contingent.

Two-time Olympic medallist Sindhu went down 18-21, 8-21 to second seed Wang Zhiyi of China in a 46-minute last-16 stage match.

HS Prannoy, returning after a shoulder injury, fought hard but lost 12-21, 19-21 to China's Weng Hong Yang.

In mixed doubles, Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto bowed out after a 13-21, 14-21 defeat to fourth-seeded Malaysians Chen Tang Jie and Toh Ee Wei.

Unnati Hooda, along with the women's doubles pair of Priya Konjengbam and Shruti Mishra, will be in action later in the day.

Ayush relied on his height to unleash steep smashes and maintained tight control at the net to dominate proceedings.

The opening game was closely fought early on, with the scores level at 4-4 before Chi moved ahead 10-6.

Ayush clawed his way back after the break, drawing level at 12-12 and then taking control as Chi struggled with his length, committing a series of unforced errors.

The Indians surged to 18-14 and closed out the game comfortably.

In the second game, Ayush raced to a 4-0 lead before Chi briefly caught up.

Regaining rhythm, the Indian led 11-7 at the interval and never looked back, using aggressive returns and sharp net play to move to 16-9.

He soon wrapped up the match, sealing it with a sharp backhand at the net. —*PTI*

Brazil's Laura makes T20I history with 9-wicket haul

DUBAI, 9 APRIL

Brazil fast bowler Laura Cardoso entered her name in the record books, becoming the first player in either men's or women's T20I cricket to pick up nine wickets in a single innings.

Cardoso delivered the sensational spell against Lesotho, finishing with extraordinary figures of 9/4 from her three overs, the best-ever bowling figures in T20I cricket, at the BCA Kalahari Women's T20I Tournament at Botswana Cricket Association Oval 2 in Gaborone.

The previous record was held by Bhutan's Sonam Yeshey, who claimed eight wickets for just seven runs against Myanmar in a men's T20I in 2025.

In women's T20Is, Cardoso surpassed Indonesia's Rohmalia's figures of 7/0 against Mongolia in 2024, according to the ICC.

Earlier in the match on Thursday, Brazil posted a commanding total of 202, powered by impressive knocks from Roberta Avery (48 off 35) and Monnike Machado (69 not out off 41). Cardoso's incredible spell began in the second over when the pacer picked up a hat-trick. She followed it up with four more wickets in the fourth over to take her tally to seven. —*PTI*

Fonseca eases into quarterfinals

MONTE CARLO, 9 APRIL

Nineteen-year-old Joao Fonseca reached the quarterfinals of a Masters 1000 event for the first time when he strode to a convincing 6-3, 6-2 win over Matteo Berrettini in Monte Carlo on Thursday.

The Brazilian's last-eight opponent will be world No. 3 Alexander Zverev, who dispatched Zizou Bergs 6-2, 7-5.

Fonseca, who is making his first appearance in Monte Carlo, produced some superb tennis to see off an opponent who had thrashed Daniil Medvedev 6-0, 6-0 in the second round.

The teenager is the youngest man to reach this stage in Monte Carlo since Rafael Nadal and Richard Gasquet in 2005, and is the first Brazilian to reach a Masters 1000 quarterfinal since Thomaz Bellucci in Madrid in 2011.

He is the second man born in 2006 to reach the quarterfinals at a 1000-level event, after Spaniard Martin Landaluce, who reached the last eight in Miami in March. —*PTI*

AW C'ships: Indian women confirm 3 medals

KYRGYZSTAN, 9 APRIL

Indian women confirmed three medals at the Asian wrestling championships in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on Thursday. Meenakshi (53kg) booked a place in the final, while Hansika Lamba (55kg) and Neha Sangwan (59kg) recorded come-from-behind wins to claim a bronze apiece.

Meenakshi, who stunned two-time Worlds bronze medallist Antim Panghal in the trials to get selected for the continental event, got past Uzbekistan's Sakibjamal Esbosynova 15-4 and Korea's Seoyoung Park 4-2 to reach the final. She will take on former World silver medallist Jin Zhang of China in the gold medal contest. The 19-year-old Hansika beat Kyrgyzstan's Aruuke Kadyrbek Kyzy 6-1, while Neha defeated double Asian medallist Bolortuya Khurelkhuu of Mongolia 10-4. Harshita (72kg) also made it to the bronze medal match.—*PTI*

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE QUARTERFINAL

Dominant PSG beat Liverpool

LIVEPOOL, 9 APRIL

Khvicha Kvaratskhelia celebrates scoring his team's second goal -X/@PSG

Liverpool face a huge task to reach the Champions League last four after a humbling 2-0 defeat to holders Paris Saint-Germain in their quarter-final first leg at the Parc des Princes.

Desire Doue scored a deflected opener, and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia punished poor defending to add a brilliantly taken second in a one-sided contest in Paris as Liverpool were condemned to a fourth consecutive away defeat for the first time since April 2012.

"When we pressed them high, we were ripped apart," Arne Slot said in his press conference. "The second half of the game for us was more about surviving."

The margin of defeat would have been greater if not for some wasteful Paris Saint-Germain finishing and good goalkeeping from Giorgi Mamardashvili, who made saves from Doue, Kvaratskhelia, Ousmane Dembele, and Achraf Hakimi as the hosts dominated. —*PTI*

ATLETICO WINS 2-0 AT 10-MAN BARCELONA

BARCELONA, 9 APRIL

Atletico Madrid's Julian Alvarez, right, takes a free kick during the Champions League quarterfinal -X/ATLETICO MADRID

Atletico Madrid scored twice after Barcelona was reduced to 10 men to earn a valuable 2-0 road win and take the advantage in their Champions League quarterfinal on Wednesday.

A superb free kick by Julián Álvarez and a second goal by Alexander Sorloth gave Diego Simeone his first win at Camp Nou since Atletico's long-standing coach started his stint with the club 15 years ago.

"I don't think my Atleti had ever won at Camp Nou," said Simeone, whose Atletico had won at Barcelona when it played at the Olympic Stadium in 2024 but never at Camp Nou.

"They're arguably the best team in Europe, along with Paris (PSG) and Bayern (Munich). Through good teamwork, we were able to capitalize on key moments in the match."

Barcelona had hemmed Atletico into its box when the hosts received a double blow that left Hansi Flick's team down a man and behind a goal just before halftime. —*PTI*

Khalin extends lead to 3 shots at Andhra Open 2026

VISAKHAPATNAM, 9 APRIL

Khalin Joshi carded a one-under 70 to extend his lead to three shots at seven-under 206 after round three at the Rs 1 crore Andhra Open 2026 here on Thursday.

Bengaluru-based 33-year-old Khalin (68-68-70), a six-time winner, who opened the week at the DP World PGTI event with rounds of 68 and 68, now carries a comfortable advantage into the final round at the East Point Golf Club here.

Dubai-based Yash Majmudar (71-69-69) and Delhi's Rashid Khan (70-72-67) were tied second at four-under 209. Majmudar returned a 69, while Rashid produced the day's best round of 67 to move into contention.

Joshi, currently 55th on the DP World PGTI Order of Merit, is now in a prime position to end a four-year winless run, with his last title coming in Coimbatore in August 2022. With a three-shot advantage, Joshi will look to hold his nerve in the final round as he targets his seventh professional title. —*PTI*

ASIAN BOXING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Preeti, Minakshi headline India's gold rush

ULAANBAATAR, 9 APRIL

Reigning world champion Minakshi Hooda and Preeti Pawar led the gold rush for India, with two other compatriots also registering victories in the finals to be crowned Asian boxing champions here on Thursday.

Joining Minakshi (48kg) and Asian Games bronze medallist Preeti (54kg) at the top of the podium were Priya Ghanghas (60kg) and World Boxing Cup gold medallist Arundhati Choudhary (70kg).

In the men's section, Vishwanath Suresh (48kg) and Sachin Siwach (60kg) will compete in their respective finals on Friday.

The biggest setback for India came in the 57kg final, where reigning world champion Jaismine Lamboria suffered a 0-5 defeat to Thailand's two-time world championships silver medallist Punrawee Ruenros, formerly known as Jutamas Jitpong.

India also secured another silver with Alfiya Pathan (80+kg) finishing runner-up. She went down 0-5 to Kazakhstan's Dina Islambekova in her lone bout of the Championships.

The Indian women's team finished with an impressive haul of 10 medals, four gold, two silver, and four bronze.

However, with limited participation in certain weight categories, including fields of just three boxers, the likes of Lovlina Borgohain (75kg), Pooja Rani (80kg), and Alfiya essentially received medals for just participating.

Minakshi set the tone by securing India's first gold of the day with a commanding 5-0 win over Mongolia's Nomundari Enkh-Amgalan.

Preeti extended her fine run with yet another dominant display. —*PTI*